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ABSTRACT

Noting that Soviet prose, drama, and poetry reveal the nuances of the moods and policies fostered by the Soviet government while reflecting the Soviet reading public's interests and aspirations, this report describes a study of the values and attitudes by which the Soviets live as reflected in the literature published in Soviet literary magazines between 1976 and 1980. Following an overview of the project, the first section of the report discusses each of the seven Soviet literary journals studied. The remaining portion of the report discusses topics found in Soviet literature as follows: (1) vocal Soviet patriotism, (2) positive hero, (3) industrial development and its rural variants, (4) the vanishing Russian village, (5) the Soviet city, (6) Russian history, (7) World War II, (8) the exotic, (9) equality and elitism, (10) ethics, (11) crime and antisocial behavior, (12) the sexual revolution, (13) the shaky Soviet family, (14) religion, (15) the senior citizen, and (16) America. A concluding section discusses the overall merits and shortcomings of Soviet literary efforts. (HTH)

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READING FOR THE MASSES: POPULAR SOVIET FICTION, 1976-80

Research Report

Prepared under contract by

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Office of Research
International Communication Agency
United States of America

NOTE

Reading for the Masses: Popular Soviet Fiction, 1976-80 was prepared under contract for the USICA Office of Research by Professor Maurice Friedberg of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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SUMMARY

The contents of recent Soviet writing--prose, above all, but also drama and verse--are of interest not merely for literary reasons alone. Less "official" than the material contained in Soviet journalistic output, they are also, paradoxically, more revealing of the nuances of the moods and policies fostered by the Soviet Establishment at the time of their publication. At the same time, if such writing is to gain a degree of acceptance among the reading public, it must also reflect some of that public's true interests and aspirations, and harmonize as closely as possible with its esthetic predilections. Apparently, recent Soviet literary output enjoys an enviable degree of acceptance among Soviet readers. Thus, in a survey conducted in 1974 among readers in the industrial Urals revealed that between seventy and seventy-five percent of respondents favored works by contemporary Soviet authors. Even higher figures emerged from a survey conducted a decade earlier which disclosed that recent Soviet literature was the favorite reading fare of eighty-eight percent of secondary and trade school students, seventy-seven percent of the workers and seventy-two percent of engineers and technicians.[1] This mass appeal of contemporary Soviet fiction, poetry and plays, and their dual role as reflection of popularly held attitudes and beliefs and also, simultaneously, as tools in the unceasing efforts of the Soviet authorities to shape and influence them was a major impetus for the undertaking of the present study which, incidentally, proved exceptionally time-consuming. Nevertheless, it was felt that the project was well worth the effort. As a Soviet critic perceptively observed in 1980, whatever recent Soviet literature's other attributes (and, one might add, very uneven artistic merit), its one common denominator is a persistent quest for moral values.[2] Our aims, then, were admittedly ambitious. With recent Soviet writing as evidence, we have

sought to identify--in the words of Tolstoy's famous story--some of the values that Soviet men live by.

Popular Soviet Russian fiction, drama and poetry published between 1976 and 1980 was examined on the basis of a systematic analysis of the contents of seven mass circulation Russian literary monthlies with printings averaging over a quarter-million, as well as paperback series with press runs as high as 2,500,000. Only original Russian works were considered.

Overtly propagandistic writing that was so common during the Stalin era is now relatively rare, though disquietingly increasing in frequency in 1979-80. That is not to say, however, that didactic literature was ever in serious danger of becoming supplanted by art for art's sake. Side by side with literature probing various aspects of the human condition (or, at the other end of esthetic hierarchy, entertaining on the level of the soap opera), there was always much writing championing a militant brand of Soviet Russian nationalism and patriotism, occasionally with jingoistic and xenophobic overtones (including a number of anti-American incidents). This particular theme is fostered by steady and very large-scale publication of new literary works with World War II settings.

Other values championed by these recent Soviet literary works aimed at mass audiences include admiration for scientific and industrial progress, for man's conquest of nature and for a lone individual's courage and endurance in the service of these causes. True, to an extent the efforts to champion these attitudes are vitiated by the third major positive theme of recent Russian writing for mass audiences (and also of much of the more "highbrow" literature) which is that of wistful, elegiac evocation of the rapidly vanishing pastoral Russian village and the patriarchal way of life. While frequently the subject of complaints by orthodox Communist critics, this currently popular theme is probably being tolerated because of its

strongly nationalistic Russian and, on occasion, also obliquely anti-Western flavor.

Popular Soviet Russian fiction, poetry and drama of 1976-80 record with strong disapproval the impact on the country's citizenry of two kinds of alien ideology. The first, imported from the West, and in particular the United States, is said to exert a destructive influence on the younger generation and the intellectuals. It is manifested through mindless infatuation with Western fashions, music and gadgets. The other pernicious influence is older and more tenacious. It fills a void created by failure of official Soviet values to satisfy all human needs. Religion is occasionally shown making some inroads even among the educated young.

Soviet Russian literature of mass appeal probes sympathetically the entire gamut of human emotions--love and jealousy, longing and sorrow, loneliness and doubts. In a drastic departure from earlier practices in Soviet writing it describes even depression and other types of clinical emotional illness. It also describes in great detail a wide range of social problems, such as the increasing instability of the family, the epidemic of divorces, the stigma of unwed motherhood, inadequate housing, shortages, poor services, juvenile delinquency and petty crime. All these are viewed with genuine concern and sincere compassion--indeed, frequently with an unconcealed effort to elicit similar reactions in the reader.

At the same time, in a drastic break with the muckraking traditions of Russian writing during the liberal interval of post-Stalin "thaws," Russian writing of the Brezhnev era resolutely avoids overtly linking any of these social ills to existing social institutions and practices, and eschews any demands for social reform.

Recent Soviet Russian writing's failure to link its appeals for sympathy and understanding to demands of reforms and justice is reminiscent of two

earlier Russian literary movements. In the eighteenth century, Neo-Classicism and Sentimentalism faithfully served repressive Russian monarchy by producing writing of a very similar kind.

Abbreviations

DN	Druzhba narodov
M	Moskva
MG	Molodaya gvardiya
NS	Nash sovremennik
NM	Novy mir
RG	Roman gazeta
Z	Znamya
Zv	Zvezda

Reading for the Masses: Popular Soviet Russian Fiction, 1976-80

by Maurice Friedberg

1. Introduction

For some years now, Soviet journalists, diplomats and scholars have been claiming with some regularity and with considerable bitterness that while representative works of American literature are regularly printed in the USSR, the few Soviet authors translated in the United States are either "dissidents" or anti-Soviet emigres. Truly representative Soviet books, the argument goes, stand little chance of seeing the light of day in America. This writer recalls dining a quarter of a century ago in Governor Averell Harriman's home in New York with a group of Uzbek intellectuals and Party officials who demanded to know what is being done in America to reciprocate for the translation into their language of Mark Twain and Theodore Dreiser. Quite apart from the greatly exaggerated claims regarding the availability in the USSR of American writing (and disregarding also the insinuations voiced in the USSR that Soviet literature in America is the target of a dark anti-Soviet conspiracy), there is some truth in these allegations. Although scores of works by politically loyal and artistically conformist Soviet authors are regularly published here, it is a fact that many Soviet authors popular in the USSR, including not a few best selling ones, are virtually unknown here for a variety of reasons.[3] Most are presumed, with good reason, to be of little interest to American readers. Artistically undistinguished and hopelessly old-fashioned, prudish in their portrayal of sex and sometimes moralizing as well, such truly representative specimens of Soviet reading for the masses are unlikely to appeal to foreign audiences.

Yet the fact remains that it is precisely this pulp fiction, often of marginal esthetic value, that accounts for the bulk of writing produced by the Soviet Union's approximately eight thousand professional authors. It

is their output, rather than that of the more serious Soviet writers we know, that accounts for the lion's share of the reading of rank-and-file Soviet citizens, whose strong partiality for the latest in Soviet writing is, as pointed out, a matter of documented record. There are thus good reasons to assume that the beliefs and values embodied in these books reflect to a significant degree widely held views and prejudices, fears and aspirations and, in turn, play a major role in the shaping of common norms and opinions. In addition, however esthetically undistinguished, Soviet pulp fiction, middle-brow poetry and conventional drama, yield a great deal of otherwise unobtainable data on the informal workings of a wide variety of Soviet institutions. This fact has long been recognized by many Western scholars and at least one distinguished American economist, Alexander Gerschenkron of Harvard, has for several decades now been systematically sifting Soviet fiction for this type of information. It is therefore somewhat surprising that to date only a single full-length book by a Western scholar deals with the subject of popular Soviet fiction.[4]

Mindful of these considerations, we shall examine in this paper a large and, in our view, representative sample of original Soviet Russian writing first published during the five years between 1976 and 1980. As shall become apparent, the sample includes works by established Soviet authors as well as newcomers, "liberals" and "reactionaries," gifted artists and crude hacks, prose writers, poets and playwrights. Because most new Soviet writing appears at first in literary periodicals (the so-called tolstye zhurnaly), the choice was made to examine the contents of seven leading Soviet literary journals for the period from 1976 to 1980. These were Novyi mir (hereafter abbreviated NM), Moskva (M), Nash sovremennik (NS), Molodaya gvardiya (MG), Druzhba narodov (DN), Znamya (Z), and Zvezda (Zv). Their press runs ranged from a low of 113,000 for Zvezda to a high of 600,000 copies per issue of

Molodaya gvardiya. The average press run for the other journals was 200,000. Five of the seven publications examined here appear on a 1968 list of eight favorite Soviet Russian literary journals.[5] In addition, other periodicals were consulted on a non-systematic basis.

Most importantly, we have also examined the full five year run of Roman gazeta (hereafter RG), which appears every other week as a paperback of approximately 120 very large double-column pages. The editors of Roman gazeta were probably correct in claiming, in a preface to the issue No. 14 (1977) which marked the fiftieth anniversary of the enterprise, that it is the world's largest publication devoted in its entirety to fiction, drama and verse. The press run of each issue of Roman gazeta is anywhere from one to nearly three million copies. Roman gazeta prints only works that have already been published elsewhere. Thus, indirectly, we have also examined some of the contents of such journals as Oktyabr', Yunost' and Neva, specifically those of their contents that were singled out by the Soviet publishing authorities as deserving of the widest possible circulation.

While political diversity among the Soviet literary journals is by and large a thing of the past (during the Khrushchev era there was no mistaking Tvardovsky's "liberal" Novyi mir for Kochetov's Stalinist Oktyabr'), some differences among the periodicals persist. Thus, Molodaya gvardiya, a journal aimed primarily at young readers, is to this day ideologically more rigid and artistically far less sophisticated than Moskva, which caters to an adult audience. The editors of Novyi mir, no longer reformist crusaders, remains more moderate and significantly more literate than those of Znamya or Zvezda which print a much higher percentage of war fiction, "production" novels and ostentatiously patriotic verse.

As shall become apparent, most of our discussion will deal with the larger prose genres, the novel and the novella (povest'), with drama and

the short story a distinct second, and poetry last. Though an accurate reflection of the amount of space the journals allocate to the various literary genres, this sequence is also a result of the fact that with some exceptions, poetry cannot, if only because of the brevity of most verse, embody much of the kind of content that concerns us here. The same is also true to an extent of the short story. And our chief interests are the values, aspirations and realities--mundane and spiritual--that are reflected in Soviet literature, those it seeks to oppose and those it aims to foster.

2. Vocal Soviet Patriotism Lives

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the news of Stalin's death--at least insofar as concerns its impact on mass Soviet fiction--has been greatly exaggerated. The situation that actually obtains is more accurately described by an "updated" Soviet slogan: Stalin may well be dead, but his cause lives on. A combination of wishful thinking and a natural tendency to ascribe greater importance to news ("man bites dog") has understandably encouraged Western observers of the Soviet literary scene to over-emphasize the importance of even timid departures from Stalinist norms. This tendency, not surprisingly, was encouraged by personal contacts with the Soviet dissidents and nonconformists who were, for obvious reasons, all too happy to point with pride even to very modest victories. On the other side, in an ostensible paradox, these same views were actively encouraged by the Soviet cultural officialdom, sometimes, indeed, by the same man who had placed obstacles in the way of the political dissidents and literary nonconformists. In their eagerness to foster the impression among foreigners that Stalinist policies are a thing of the past, Soviet cultural bureaucrats would ostentatiously point to the nonconformist literature that was grudgingly tolerated as supporting evidence.

Over the years, this strategem brought about the appearance in the USSR of "Beryozka" literature, so named after the Soviet hard currency stores in which foreigners can purchase goods that are beyond the reach of Soviet men and women. A significant number of books fit that description quite literally. While readily obtainable in the West in bookstores specializing in Soviet publications (and often also actually in "Beryozka" stores within the USSR), they were rarely available to rank-and-file Soviet citizens.[6] More obviously, literary works that were barred from publication within the USSR were, on occasion, tacitly allowed to appear abroad. Indeed, such literary nonconformists as the balladeers Bulat Okudzhava and the late Vladimir Vysotskii or the poets Andrei Voznesenskii and, most visibly, Yevgenii Yevtushenko, though at times bitterly criticized at home, were often allowed to travel abroad and to recite there before large audiences the same works that provoked critical wrath in the USSR.

Finally and most importantly, Western students of post-Stalin Soviet literature tended to lose sight of the undeniable fact that, newsworthy or not, in the overwhelming majority of instances, dogs continued biting men. Even in the best of times, during the post-Stalin "thaws" of 1956 and 1962, "liberal" and "dissident" authors comprised but a small minority among the country's active writers. Moreover, the journals in which they were published, such as Novyi mir and Yunost', were greatly outnumbered by periodicals that were seemingly little affected by the relatively relaxed atmosphere of the first post-Stalin decade. Not surprisingly, the staid conservatism of the Brezhnev period, particularly of 1975-80, served to accentuate this situation. Many of the "liberal" and "dissident" Soviet writers of the late 1950's and early 1960's are now emigres. Those who remained in the USSR for the most part shy away in their works from any overtly political concerns. They are in the majority and include most of the country's leading writers.

What may come as a surprise to many Western students of Soviet writing--though not to readers of ordinary Soviet literary journals--is the number of authors continuing in Stalinist traditions of overtly propagandistic prose, drama and verse, though now less shrill in tone. True, many of them are old. It is their ranks, however, that actually appear to be growing--in stark contrast to the shrinking numbers of the embattled "liberals." And it surely was a sign of changing times that one installment of Leonid Brezhnev's memoirs, The Virgin Lands, not only appeared in Novyi mir, the erstwhile bastion of liberalism (and also of literary distinction), but was then awarded the Lenin prize--not for its historical value, but ostensibly for its literary merit.[7]

The atmosphere of new Soviet conservatism has rescued from oblivion some of the most politically militant authors. Thus, the veteran Stalinist writer Anatoli Sofronov is now very active again. He produces such uplifting fare as the rather poor imitation of Mayakovsky's "Verses About a Soviet Passport," filled with jingoistic patriotism. Judging by the fact that it appeared in an official journal of the Young Communist League, this poetry was obviously deemed particularly beneficial for the post-Stalin generation.[8] Sofronov produced also some equally patriotic verse for an adult audience, which exhorted decent citizens to heap scorn and contempt on potential traitors who are prepared to sell out their Soviet homeland.[9]

Vintage Stalinist prose continues to emerge from the pen of Vadim Kozhevnikov, best known for such spy novels as The Shield and the Sword. In 1978 Kozhevnikov published a yarn with a World War II locale replete with old propaganda cliches, though interesting enough because of its Arctic setting, and a story of two men competing for the favors of the same woman. Some Soviet readers of Jack London may have detected in it echos of the American writer.[10] This was followed in 1979 by a Kozhevnikov novella set

in the present but otherwise undistinguishable from pulp fiction of the Stalin era.[11] The protagonist, a shock worker, upon being decorated with a medal, discovers that the decoration actually imposes on him additional obligations. From now on, it seems, the Party would expect him to be proving again and again for the rest of his life that he still deserves to wear it.[12] Kozhevnikov's readers were then treated to a brief lecture on the October Revolution, described here as "the highest act of humanism in the history of humanity," with appropriate references to "Lenin, the greatest genius."[13] The story also contained some embarrassingly extravagant praise of the Communist Party.[14]

Vladimir Soloukhin, a younger author of a strongly nationalist neo-Slavophile bent, published in 1978 some random observations on literature and travel, with some pointedly patriotic and anti-Western asides,[15] while a highly militant "novella [povest'] in verse" that came out simultaneously (the same month) bore the name of Soloukhin's long-time Westernizing opponent. In a narrative poem entitled A Dove in Santiago, Yevgenii Yevtushenko, once a standard-bearer of the "liberal" anti-Stalinists and now a member in good standing of the Establishment, unleashed his fury at the "fascist state of Chile."[16] Another major figure from the days of the "thaw" was the prose writer Fedor Abramov, made famous by the short novel Vokrug da okolo (translated in the West under the title One Day on the Collective Farm) which was a biting expose of the absurdities of collectivized agriculture. Though little has changed in Soviet villages, Abramov has obviously recanted his errors; at least so it seems from his 1978 novel The House (Dom).[17] His farmers, poor and dejected during the "thaw", are now described as prosperous and patriotic. Attempting to impress a fellow villager with the luxury in which his daughter now lives, a farmer confesses, "I thought I was in Communism."[18] Patriotic slogans are used in casual ordinary conversations,

and one farmer boasts of having once seen Lenin in person.[19] Far from clinging to religious beliefs, as Soviet peasants were often portrayed in fiction of the "thaw" period, Abramov's farmers are vocally contemptuous of religion.[20] In a quarrel, each of the participants is trying to score points by claiming that his views promote the Party's cause.[21] Finally, to add insult to injury, Abramov's novel, breaking with all traditions of the liberal era, informs the readers that inmates of Stalin's concentration camps were common criminals.[22]

Many other, though less striking examples of neo-Stalinist sloganeering could be cited here. A few of these will be referred to later in different contexts. We should, however, single out among the new voices Yegor Isayev, the author of a long narrative poem which extols Soviet patriotism, the Red Army, and the beauty of Russia's countryside.[23]

A routine complaint in Soviet literature--one that is voiced periodically against authors regarded as not militant enough--charges them with failure to implement in their works the task set for them by the party. In recent years, Leonid Brezhnev had appealed to men and women of letters to "write about contemporary issues in a manner that would advance the most our Party's and our people's concrete, practical goals."[24] It was the emphasis on the latter, rather than, say, an abstraction like "victorious march to Communism" that may have suggested some of the "concrete" and "practical" responses cited above.

Yet it is clear that a great many Soviet authors of the Brezhnev era apparently do not share this view, and openly propagandistic writing is now the exception rather than the rule. Indeed, here and there one encounters even an ironical quip or aside aimed at such prose, drama and verse. More significantly, the legitimacy of such unideological responses is now openly defended by authoritative critics of the stature of Tamara Motyleva. Writing

in 1972 in Voprosy literatury, the foremost Soviet scholarly journal of literary theory, Motyleva declared:

> The art of Socialist Realism can achieve its didactic objectives in different ways. . . .Art can influence the minds and hearts of men not only by means of positive models, but also through negative examples. The latter help alert to human types and ethical views alien to Socialism.[25]

What Motyleva proposed, in effect, was that Soviet literature abandon its insistence on positive models for emulation that has long set it apart from other bodies of modern writing. Motyleva's appeal would reintroduce in Soviet writing tragic heroes (and downright villains)--and thus bring it closer to contemporary Western writing and also to pre-Soviet Russian masters. Furthermore, Motyleva had merely restated in theoretical terms suggestions that had already been voiced elsewhere. Consider, for instance, the following suggestions made in Literaturnaya gazeta on June 18, 1975:

> Socialist Realism does not in the least require that the author state his position in a declarative form. In a political poem or novel depicting sharp class conflicts, a blunt statement of the author's views is natural and necessary. But in works such as love lyrics, in a psychological tale, or in literature describing so-called byt [everyday life], such forms may be out of place.[26]

Discussion of the subject continues. In the meantime, however, legitimacy has been bestowed on a Soviet author's right to refrain in his writing from overt sloganeering, and the majority of Soviet authors are availing themselves of the right.

3. The Positive Hero

Some Soviet authors, however--whether out of orthodox conviction or through sheer inertia--have failed to avail themselves of the privilege to eschew open politics. Thus, the Positive Hero, a literary model intended for emulation by readers, is, after some years of relative neglect, beginning to reappear with increasing frequency in Soviet writing.[27] There are, to be sure, some differences. Thus, Positive Heroes of the late 1970's are no

longer the automatons of Soviet writing of the Stalin era--particularly of the period between the end of the war and the dictator's death--whose near-total freedom from normal human frailties made them, paradoxically, unsuitable for their intended utilitarian function. By contrast, Positive Heroes of the Brezhnev era are allowed to retain a variety of foibles, imperfections and even downright ruinous vices. These are freely portrayed on the condition that they are not allowed to interfere in the positive protagonists' primary concerns and do not affect their loyalties, judgment and performance. Consequently, such "modernized" embodiments of essential positive attributes are not quite as ludicrous as were their ancestors of the Stalin era--and are thus presumably also more convincing as realistic models for imitation.

That is not to say that the Positive Hero's older model is no longer being produced. Thus, Boris Polevoi, a stalwart practitioner of Stalinist Socialist Realism, had his recent novel Anyuta brought out in 1977 in a printing of 1,600,000 copies. In an introduction to the novel Vitalii Ozerov, a leading critic, hailed Polevoi as a "bard of ideological firmness, courage and self-sacrifice."[28] Polevoi's story is simplicity itself. The narrator, an army veteran, lost an eye in combat, but returned to front line duty. (In Polevoi's 1946 Stalinist classic, a military pilot was shown returning to active duty after the loss of both legs.) Now a distinguished senior engineer, the veteran, still a bachelor, accidentally learns from a radio broadcast that the nurse who had saved his life in army hospital is alive. . .Curtain.

Semen Babaevskii's laurels, like Polevoi's, were earned for exemplary services to Stalinist fiction: his 1948 novel The Knight of the Golden Star depicted a war veteran whose valor on collective farm fields was but a continuation of his heroism in battle. During the post-Stalin thaw Babaevskii

was occasionally singled out by the more liberal Soviet critics as an example of degradation of Soviet literature during the period of the "cult of personality," a distinction he occasionally shared with Polevoi. Now, however, Babaevskii has staged a spectacular comeback. His novel The Cossack Village was, like Polevoi's, also printed in 1977 in 1,600,000 copies. Set once again in the countryside, Babaevskii's novel portrays three types of now allegedly prosperous Soviet farmers. The Positive Hero is essentially the same that Babaevskii had depicted three decades earlier in the novel that brought his notoriety: a model soldier turned a model farm administrator. As for the villains, two variants are proposed. The first is simple enough: he is a greedy and selfish man possessed by destructive capitalist instincts. The other is more interesting. I. Aleksandrov's introduction describes the inept and "liberal" protagonist as an exponent of volyuntarizm, the code word for the now discredited Khrushchev heresy. Thus has the old Stalinist author found a way to avenge himself on his "liberal" detractors.[29]

Not all such novels are the work of older authors. Full Speed Ahead, the work of Ye. Kaplinskaya, a young author, features an entire gallery of upright model Communist shock workers, and bears an appropriate subtitle: "A novel about a delegate to the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."[30]

More complex positive personages, happy in their public lives but often incapable of harmonious personal relationships, are featured in Yevgenii Vorob'ev's novel Travel Itch. Thus, for instance, a woman's exceptionally successful career is shown as the prime reason for the breakdown of her marriage and an executive at a Siberian construction site realizes that strictness with subordinates will cost him personal popularity.[31]

The subject is treated at greater length in Anatolii Anan'ev's massive

novel The Years When There Was No War which began to be serialized in Novyi mir in 1975 but was concluded only after four years' interruption in 1979.[32] The novel's concluding installments feature an instructive contrast between old-time and present-day Positive Heroes. In keeping with old traditions of popular Soviet fiction, both are district Communist Party (raikom) secretaries, generally the highest level of Party bureaucracy depicted in Soviet writing. The old Party boss, now retired, is shown as the right man for his times. Though overly stern, perhaps, he is shown as a decent man; no mention is made of any wrongdoings in which he may have been implicated during the Stalin era. His one failure was his inability to control his wife's appetite for luxuries, and to avert his daughter's two unsuccessful marriages. Men of his generation, Anan'ev notes, not only were taught to believe that work comes first (no one, the author suggests, could quarrel with that) but that family problems will somehow take care of themselves. The old Party functionary's successor and former son-in-law is no different from other men and women his age. Their personal lives are unsettled, their families unstable. Ability to cope with difficulties does not, apparently, extend to one's intimate relationships. It is worth noting that Anan'ev's generally upbeat novel about upright Soviet farmers and supervisory personnel and their efforts to mechanize Soviet agriculture, was reprinted in 1980 in two and a half million copies per volume as the first two issues of Roman gazeta for that year.

Almost unknown outside the USSR, Mikhail Kolesnikov is one of the most prolific and successful purveyors of politically orthodox popular Soviet fiction, much of it offering interesting glimpses of the Soviet upper classes, specifically Soviet captains of industry and senior business executives.

Like their capitalist counterparts, Kolesnikov's protagonists have more than their share of problems. Waste must be reduced, vested interests

resisted, production quality raised, deliveries of raw materials assured, complacency avoided, and vestiges of bureaucracy uprooted. And yet a busy Soviet industrial tycoon must also somehow fit into his crowded schedule at least some time for his family and--as befits a model Soviet citizen--keep abreast of developments in Soviet culture.[33] As if this were not enough, a sequel to the novel which takes the reader to a fictitious (so we are told) Institute of Management of National Economy unveils yet other needs.[34] Nowadays, Soviet readers are told, producing goods is not enough. One must also learn that which is implied by the exotic foreign word marketing, for without marketing one can never sell Soviet machinery in capitalist countries.[35] It seems that Soviet universities have not yet developed satisfactory methods of teaching proficiency in marketing, and a Soviet woman executive is planning to enter Harvard Business School.[36] The author then shares with his audience yet another secret. Selling abroad requires not only an ability to offer goods at competitive prices: one must also compete in quality.[37] Apparently, Soviet industrial executives and foreign trade officials are no more accustomed to such requirements than are ordinary Soviet citizens who, like it or not, must buy whatever is made available in the stores. No wonder, Kolesnikov implies, they succumb to an exotic disease called in Russian stress.[38]

Another occupational hazard senior Soviet business executives face is nepotism. There are always, it seems, relations--the executive's own or his wife's--who expect sinecures or, at the very least, undeserved promotions. Some instances are cited in Kolesnikov's first novel; it goes without saying that such pressures are rebuffed by the novel's virtuous hero. Alas, considering the chaotic state of the Soviet family and the loose sexual mores, sometimes no degree of vigilance will avail. (In a recent Soviet anecdote, a man smilingly tells a woman at a dinner party, "We are related, I believe.

Wasn't my fourth wife once married to your third husband?") In an incident related in Vil' Lipatov's runaway best seller Igor' Savvovich (reprinted in 1980 in two and a half million copies!) we find an offhand remark which, like the discovery by Oedipus of his involuntary sin of incest, should fill us with terror and pity. The crime of which a Soviet flawed hero was guilty was involuntary nepotism: "It was amusing, but true: the chief engineer . . .was, unbeknownst to himself, the real father of his own deputy."[39] No wonder Soviet executives succumb to stress.

4. Industrial Novels (and Rural Variants)

Positive Heroes are depicted, of course, against the background of factories and collective farms. Occasionally, the writer's excessive emphasis on the narrative's locale overshadows even its central protagonists.

In recent years much attention was attracted by the "rural school" of Russian writing in the USSR and their lyrical, nostalgic evocation of the disappearing traditional village.[40] The heyday of this prose appears to be over; those of its works that first appeared in 1976-80 will be considered later in the present study. Though far more significant esthetically, works of that genre must not obscure the fact that conventional Soviet "collective farm" and "industrial" novels continue to appear. Such, for instance, is Yurii Ubogii's 1979 account of the devastated Soviet countryside during the first postwar years and the dogged efforts by surviving women, veterans and invalids to rebuild their village.[41] Semen Babaevskii, mentioned earlier, produced also a novel entitled Roaming Free which contrasts the starving countryside of the early postwar period (a fact largely suppressed, incidentally, in his own works produced at that time) with alleged prosperity of Soviet villagers at present.[42] Babaevskii's 1978 novel, by the way, is remarkable as an embodiment of a number of values of politically orthodox Soviet fiction of recent years. Not only is it free of any disparaging

remarks about Stalin and Stalinism, but it actually features an older woman who recalls with great fondness attending a dinner Comrade Stalin once gave in honor of outstanding farmers. Babaevskii seems to condone some premarital sex (though not adultery), but only on the condition that it lead to lawful wedlock. His old penchant for ludicrous paeans to hard work does not seem to have diminished: a number of his farmers, to avoid wasting precious time, sleep in the fields during the summer and rumor had it that one such labor enthusiast actually forgot his wife's name! Of course, Babaevskii does not advocate such excesses, but he does speak fondly of old men and women who stubbornly refuse to retire, in part because of mistaken belief that they cannot be replaced.

One purveyor of conventional industrial novels is Vladimir Dobrovol'skii, whose exhortations for greater labor productivity are interspersed with elements of soap opera; Vyacheslav Usov is another.[43]

There is much truth in Leonid Novichenko's claim that in conventional Soviet literature ". . .hardly a book fails to raise nowadays the subject of the scientific-technological revolution," known by its Russian initials NTR.[44] The importance attached to the subject of industrial progress is attested by the fact that works of such scant merit as the maiden efforts by three young Siberian authors or by the more established Georgii Markov were each printed in 1,600,000 copies. The first three describe the building of a new railroad in Eastern Siberia, while Markov depicts two retired men, a wounded war veteran and an old Party functionary, who find ways to remain useful to society. That, and the background of geological expeditions seeking new Siberian deposits of iron ore, oil and natural gas, endeared Markov's two novels to Vadim Kozhevnikov, known as a guardian of doctrinal purity, and induced him to supply the books with an enthusiastic preface.[45]

5. The Vanishing Russian Village

The most remarkable single development in Soviet Russian writing from the mid-1960's to the present is the emergence of a reasonably large body of esthetically impressive prose works extolling the beauty of traditional villages with their patriarchal peasants, and mourning their destruction. in the name of industrial progress. Understandably, such works often have strongly nationalistic Russian overtones, though few overt expressions of a new nationalism which implicitly challenges Communist values.[46] To a large extent, the "village prose" of the 1960's was an understandable reaction to the decades of Five Year Plan propaganda, with their blind adulation of industrial progress regardless of costs, be they human, ethical or environmental. "Village prose," it is true, finds conservative virtues more congenial and this has, on occasion, elicited concern on the part of Soviet critics.[47] Yet, when all is said and done, both agrarians and partisans of modernization can espouse different social values, and we should recall that in prerevolutionary Russia liberals and reactionaries were to be found both among the Slavophiles and the Westernizers.

Not all of the new literary works with rural settings waxed lyrical about the countryside. Thus, Fedor Abramov's novel referred to earlier and reprinted in 1980 in two and a half million copies, presented Soviet farmers as passive and rather lazy--descendants, as it were, of Old Russia's peasants.[48] Living conditions, it seems, are still relatively primitive and villagers are envious of those of their kin who have moved to the city; as if to compensate for this, another author reported, they ape urban ways, including having few children.[49] Yields are low, we read elsewhere, life is boring and the young don't want to stay on the farm.[50] (Indeed, in the late 1940's, still another novelist informed, people were exiled to villages for real or imaginary transgressions.)[51] In a similar vein, a collection of tales by Vyacheslav Shugayev

which came out in 1977 in 1,600,000 copies suggested that villagers in Siberia are rather dissatisfied with their lot.[52]

More frequently, however, life in the country was portrayed positively. Often, indeed, it was idealized. A patriarchal Soviet village on the eve of World War II was presented in its pastoral simplicity in Yevgenii Nosov's novel which was issued in paperback in 1,600,000 copies.[53] Fedor Abramov described exotic peasants living in isolation in the forests in conditions that belie the fact that the tales are set in the present.[54] Mikhail Golubkov portrayed a tiny Soviet "village" whose six inhabitants live a life of their own.[55] And Vladimir Soloukhin, the single most prominent exponent of Russian nationalism in the literary community, published in 1976 some idyllic accounts of life in the country.[56] This was followed two years later by an essay in which the narrator, a writer from a big city, is delighted at being mistaken for a local farmer, and which included also praise for the Russian folk costume, a garb Soloukhin finds much superior to Western-style clothes.[57]

The single most famous work of "village prose" to appear in the late 1970's was, unquestionably, Valentin Rasputin's Farewell to Matyora. Its evocation of the doom of an island and with it of an old patriarchal way of life of Siberian peasants--both in the literal and in the figurative sense--has a haunting quality reminiscent of Chekhov's Cherry Orchard as a dirge for Old Russia's gentry. The island of Matyora will be flooded so that a dam may be built; the dam is needed to produce electricity. Such are the ways of progress. Yet more than an island will disappear. Ancestral homes and historical records will be obliterated as well, and an old woman, though physically saved, will never adjust to other surroundings.[58]

The beautifully wrought novel evoked a storm of protests. Typically, Valentin Rasputin--who is no dissident--was chided for his failure to

clearly dissociate himself from the plaints of uneducated peasants who are, perhaps, incapable of understanding that a mere isolated village cannot be allowed to block the building of a dam.[59] That the damage caused by Rasputin's and similar works of "lyrical" village prose was actually far more extensive was attested by an article in the July 1980 issue of the Soviet Union's foremost journal of literary theory. Rasputin's novel and other such writings were charged with bringing about during the decade of the 1970's an overall decline in the number of Soviet novels discussing important social issues, a serious accusation indeed.[60]

A recurring claim in Soviet writing of the 1970's credits even casual contact with nature with beneficient effect on the human psyche. City dwellers become--even if only temporarily--more truthful, open and sincere while communing with nature. This may be seen in short stories by Yurii Galkin and Yurii Bondarev.[61] The best examples, however, are provided by two novellas of Yurii Nagibin, a leading prose writer of the younger generation. The first describes a reunion in the Siberian wilderness of a group of old friends, former and present spouses and lovers, including several celebrities.[62] The other depicts a middle-aged artist who regains spiritual balance by painting birds in his studio in the country. The serenity of the surroundings help him even understand and forgive his much younger wife's affair with a man her own age, while she, in turn, comes to realize that what she had thought was love was merely an infatuation.[63]

Finally, literary interest in the Russian village has also awakened greater concern for the preservation of the natural environment.[64] It is, for instance, a central motif of Vladimir Korenev's novel about the building of a Siberian highway during the early years of the Soviet regime. The builders face hostile nature and equally unfriendly religious sectarians.[65] A strong ecological note is sounded in Viktor Astaf'yev's Kingfish, published

in 1977 in a printing of 1,600,000 copies: the novel describes among others, mass destruction of fish by poachers.[66] In a novella by Aleksandr Chereshnev, an old man who lives alone in the forest argues that killing animals for food is justified, but not for money and certainly not as a sport.[67] Most outspoken, however, is a short novel by Vladimir Chivilikhin printed in 1977 in 1,600,000 copies. Ostensibly an expose of pollution of the environment in Sweden and elsewhere in Western Europe, it also warns against similar dangers in USSR.[68]

6. The Soviet City

If countryside is synonymous with simplicity and honesty, then the city should represent opposite qualities. We find this logic in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, and echoes of it are also very much in evidence in recent Soviet popular fiction.

That is not to say, of course, that life in the city offers no advantages. These must exist, or there would be no explanation for the steady stream of new arrivals from the countryside. And yet we have encountered only one instance of positive recognition of these advantages. Vladimir Komissarov's 1976 novel about a research institute duly records the many unpleasant features of its day to day work, such as snobbery among the staff (senior people look down on those of lesser rank), theft, dishonesty, and cliquishness.[69] It does, however, concede that the relocation of the institute to the provinces was met with joy by the local people. Because of the institute, the small town now has a store which sells previously unavailable food and clothing and a movie house which shows alluring foreign films filled with sex and violence.[70]

From the Revolution of 1917 and well into postwar years, hundreds of Soviet writers described a peculiarly Soviet institution, and the many tears and occasional laughter it engendered. That institution was the communal

apartment, an overcrowded dwelling normally occupied by several families sharing a kitchen and bathroom in conditions of squalor and unwanted togetherness. There are fewer such apartments now, but they still exist. One of them serves as a setting for a 1978 novel by B. Zolotarev.[71] The narrator, an old and very fat man, describes his neighbors, most of them greedy and gossipy women. Their worries and problems include finding a dentist, getting scarce consumers' goods, arranging for the care of a dog and persuading children to study harder. Above all, however, they like to discuss marriages, divorces, and liaisons. Much of the time the old man is all alone in an apartment teeming with people. He dies two weeks before the birth of a long-awaited granddaughter, in part at least of neglect.

The new status symbol in the USSR is the cooperative apartment. The acquisition of one is no easy matter: there are long waiting lists and prices are exorbitant. Clearly, the process offers rich opportunities to the novelist and playwright, and two recent novels offer interesting glimpses of what may become new literary genres in the USSR--and also valuable documentary evidence on what is entailed in attempts to acquire better housing.

In R. Kireyev's 1979 novel a married couple with no apartment of its own, lives with the husband's parents. Unless one has connections, readers are told, the waiting period for a coop is at least three years. Furthermore, huge amounts of money are required. The strains contribute to the instability of the marriage. The wife, a physician, cannot take any time off to coincide with the husband's vacation and he leaves for the Crimea--with another woman. Kireyev's novel is also one of the few in recent Soviet fiction to depict violent crime, a mugging.[72]

Gennadii Nikolayev's story focuses on the financial aspect of acquiring a coop, although readers are informed that the purchase of one is a privilege, not a right. Only engineers can aspire to a cooperative apartment;

no ordinary workers need apply. The early parts of Nikolayev's novel are reminiscent of Gogol's Overcoat. In order to save up enough money for the cooperative apartment, the hapless protagonists skimp on necessities and resolutely deny themselves such luxuries as a beer or a cigarette. That, however, turns out not to be enough. In quest of additional funds the couple becomes involved in black market activities. Ultimately, in a reversal of traditional sex roles in fiction, it is the male partner who must sell his body to a woman who sets this as a condition for helping the couple with some money.[73]

The energy crisis in the West has prompted some dire prophecies that America's romance with the automobile may be coming to an end. By contrast, the Soviet love affair with privately owned cars is merely beginning, and the new infatuation has already inspired several novelists to describe its joys and sorrows. Anatolii Gladilin, a Soviet novelist now living in Paris, has published in the West a "biography" of a small Soviet passenger car that was almost certainly conceived, if not actually written, prior to his emigration.[74]

Vasilii Aksenov is now also an emigre. Yet his whimsical story in which cars and motorcycles are as important as their drivers and passengers, was printed in the USSR while he was still a Soviet author; it bears an uncanny resemblance to Jack Kerouac's On the Road and the Polish tales of Marek Hlasko.[75] Valerii Musakhanov's Speed takes the reader to car races and to an Automotive Research Institute where Soviet engineers are busy designing a car that would be sturdier and more economical than either Citroen or Toyota.[76]

The advent of privately owned automobiles has inevitably brought about the appearance of large public garages (state-owned or cooperative) which provide the settings for two Soviet novels. Anatolii Tkachenko's The Fourth

Gear is a collection of rather contrived yarns about the owners of cars in the garage, advice on auto repair (it seems that routine maintenance is performed on a do-it-yourself basis), and abstract theorizing on the psychological effects of driving. The novel's form harmonizes with its contents: the text is presented as a series of entries in the diary of the manager of the garage.[77] The novel is filled with practical advice on auto repair and maintenance and on relative merits of various makes of cars. At the same time, it provides interesting background on illegal "gypsy" cars in which Soviet farmers bring their produce to the market, inside gossip about driving lessons, about the black market in used cars, and the illegal building of individually owned garages. The novel's narrator is a student who works in the garage to save up some money for the setting up of a household, but his plans will not be realized. The girl he loves becomes jealous of a rich young woman he meets, and accuses him of greed. In the final analysis, all of the works cited viewed the automobile rather positively. The one dissenting note was sounded by a peasant protagonist in Road Shoulders, a novel by Mikhail Godenko, to whom automobiles are monsters that rob humans of living space, guzzle fuels that nature has produced in the core of the earth and, to add insult to injury, poison our planet's air with their exhust fumes.[78]

Housing and, more recently, automobiles are only two of the problems that city dwellers must endure. There are also others. Thus, for instance, medical care also leaves much to be desired, at least if we are to believe Yulii Krelin's What Are You Complaining Of, Doctor? The novel contains many situations fimiliar to viewers of American television series, but also offers some glimpses of problems that are, it seems, particularly pertinent in the USSR. Thus, it appears that the training of surgeons lags seriously behind the pace of hospital construction. This, in turn, encourages haste

in the training of surgeons, with the result that many hospitals are staffed by poorly trained surgeons. Some patients require expensive drugs and operations, which hospital administrators cannot afford to provide and yet remain within their budgets. And finally, the state fixes the number of patients each physician must see each day and the quotas are rather high. Patients, on the other hand, are uneasy when they see that the doctor seems to be in a hurry. Indeed, they expect him to spend a few minutes at least exchanging with them some small talk.[79]

One area in which life in the city offers more variety than the country is cultural life and entertainment. That assertion can hardly be questioned. In small provincial towns, however, life can be rather drab in that respect and aside from the movies, books are the sole entertainment available.

Quite a few people seek escapist reading which, logically enough, they expect to find in foreign books. The following passage comes from a Soviet novel published in 1977--Mariya Prilezhayeva's Autumn--and the phenomenon's authenticity is attested by published non-fictional Soviet sources:

> A number of years ago the entire city, as if seized by some madness, tried to locate copies of (and read) the hard to find translated novel, [Wilkie Collins' British thriller] A Woman in White. Somewhat earlier, the city had read, with equal fervor, [John Galsworthy's family chronicle] The Forsyte Saga. Although these novels are not at all alike, they were equally fashionable. Everybody was looking for them. Some people wanted to read them, others wished to place them on bookshelves as a decoration, just as one places a shelf. Right now the "in" novel is [Alexandre Dumas' adventure story] Queen Margot.[80]

A more detailed description of a Soviet provincial town emerges from a 1978 novel by Vil' Lipatov, the prolific producer of Soviet popular fiction.[81] As in Prilezhayeva's novel, there is interest in distant lands, and one of the negative personages, a Soviet teacher of English, braving considerable difficulties, enters a subscription to Amerika and Angliya, the Russian-language journals legally distributed in the USSR by the Embassies of the United States and of Great Britain.[82] We also learn that the provincial

town has few educated people and that there are shortages of houses and of eligible males. Long accounts are given of the doings of provincial elite (which consists largely of local factory directors), of their gossip, greed and vulgarity. And, in a comment echoed by many protagonists in recent Soviet fiction, one of Lipatov's lady school teachers, obviously no adherent of Women's Lib, complains of the "feminization of men and masculinization of women."[83]

Finding adequate housing and medical care are problems that are hardly unique to Soviet conditions. Another difficulty is peculiar to the USSR. Just managing to legally remain in Moscow is no easy matter. Ample evidence is found in Alexander Kron's novel Insomnia.[84] Attempts to obtain a residence permit result in a dilemma now known in America as Catch-22: residence permits are issued only to persons employed in Moscow, while no enterprise will hire a job candidate without a residence permit.[85] Employees in stores systematically engage in theft of merchandise, and all-but-open prostitution flourishes.[86] There are other headaches as well: "The profession of maids is dying out, while public services have, in a sense, not yet come into being."[87] Complaining of poor service is a total waste of time. One must simply swallow one's pride and hope for better luck next time.[88]

7. From a Historical Perspective

History, in Mikhail Pokrovsky's opinion, is politics projected into the past. That the pioneer Marxist historian was essentially correct is attested, ironically, by the ups and downs in the degree of official approval enjoyed by his own work. More visibly, it is reflected by the never ceasing process of rewriting, as it were, Russian and world history to have them conform with current views and policies. This ongoing re-evaluation of history affects also historical novels and, indeed, all fictional references to history. And conversely, portrayal of the past in Soviet writing is one

of the more reliable guides to the nuances of Soviet politics as of the date of publication (or re-publication) of the literary work.[89]

The most distant historical event dealt with in popular Soviet writing of 1976-80 examined for this study was the Battle of Kulikovo of 1380, a Russian victory that marked the beginning of the end of the Tatar and Mongol occupation. The event's six hundredth anniversary in 1980, and the inevitable associations with present-day Sino-Soviet tensions, inspired some occasional verse, of which Dmitrii Ushakov's was a typical example.[90]

Other works with historical settings were not pegged to specific anniversaries. In some of these, the historical background was relatively inobtrusive, as in Mark Kharitonov's novella about Pushkin and Gogol, Daniil Granin's account of a visit to Staraya Russa, the town where Dostoevsky's Brothers Karamazov is set, and Yurii Nagibin's novella about the life and times of Johann Sebastian Bach.[91] (It is worth noting, by the way, that the latter two authors, politically among the most controversial in the mid-1950's, now favor relatively "safe" subjects.)

By contrast, three works about nineteenth-century Russia have considerable relevance to contemporary events. B. Vasil'yev's novel described Russia in the 1870's, on the eve of Russo-Turkish wars which, as the introduction by Professor P. Zayonchkovskii pointed out, ultimately resulted in Bulgaria's and Serbia's independence, and also benefited Rumania.[92] Nikolai Zadornov's novel about a Russian maritime expedition to Japan was a paean to the Russian navy and to Russia's civilizing mission in the Orient.[93] Of the three, Konstantin Skvortsov's play with the patriotic title We Do Not Forsake Our Fatherland was by far the most interesting. Set in 1837-40, it has as its hero the poet Vasilii Zhukovskii. The play's central message is that Russia's ostensible technological backwardness notwithstanding, there is no reason for Russians to feel inferior to Westerners. Once they

set their minds to any task, the Russians' innate ingenuity and exceptional gifts will more than compensate for any handicaps (the play's case in point is production of steel). Skvortsov's other protagonist, the archreactionary tsar Nicholas I (ordinarily blamed by Pushkin's biographers for the death of the poet, and nicknamed also "the gendarme of Europe") appears as a rather likable and benign figure.[94] Skvortsov's 1979 play is a very close, if inept, imitation of Nikolai Leskov's Tale of the Left-Handed Smith from Tula and the Steal Flea. Published nearly exactly a century earlier (in 1883), Leskov's comic tale remains to this day one of the very few positive literary portrayals of Nicholas I, and because of its anti-Western and patriotic Russian flavor was a great favorite during Stalin's "anti-cosmopolitan" purges of the late 1940's. The publication of Konstantin Skvortsov's play in 1979 may thus be a disquieting indication of growing anti-Western and anti-liberal moods in Brezhnev's Russia.

But then, even Imperial Russia on the eve of the Communist Revolution of 1917 is, as a rule, portrayed rather positively. Such are, for instance, Vasilii Smirnov's patriarchal Russian peasants,[95] Ivan Danilov's Don Cossacks.[96] Boris Yevgen'yev's Moscow townfolk,[97] and even Yevgenii Permyak's haute bourgeoisie.[98] Finally, we should mention Valentin Katayev's pretentious The Cemetery in Skulyany. The work describes a mystical kinship between the now octogenarian author--while still a young officer in the tsarist army during World War I--and his own grandfather and great-grandfather, respectively captain and general in the Imperial Russian Army. However contrived the tale, its ideological thrust is clear enough: there is unbroken continuity between the Russia of the tsars and that of the Soviets, and between their armies. One presages the other, and conversely, the latter is an incarnation of the former. This now apparently desirable message may have influenced Soviet

publishers to bring out the novel in a printing of 1,600,000 copies.[99]

One novel describing the twilight of Imperial Russia deserves separate mention. Valentin Pikul''s At the Finishing Line was serialized in 1979 in four issues of a major literary monthly.[100] In the epilogue, Pikul' attempted to preempt possible objections to the ostensibly historical novel, for instance, protests against the author's failure to portray police persecutions of the revolutionary movement. Pikul''s justification is disarmingly simple: a novel cannot possibly portray everything.[101] It was not, however, that particular feature of the novel which provoked objections. Rather, it was his suggestions that the monk Grigorii Rasputin, a confidant of the Empress and one of the most odious figures in all of Russian history (Rasputin was ultimately assassinated by a group of Russian aristocrats) was merely a tool in the hands of the real villains, the Jewish bourgeoisie. The novel's strong anti-Semitism resulted in much indignation abroad and some protests in the USSR, and Pikul' was subsequently criticized in the press.[102] It should be emphasized, however, that Pikul''s novel appeared at a time when the Soviet press carried literally hundreds of articles about the evils of Zionism, nefarious activities of international Jewish bourgeoisie, and alleged Israeli atrocities. The year Pikul''s novel appeared, Soviet publishers brought out another score of books and pamphlets purporting to unmask the criminal nature of the teachings of Judaism. It is only when viewed against this background that the significance of Pikul''s novel can be understood. It should also be added that, for a variety of reasons, anti-Semitic propaganda, both in Stalin's time and after his death, has been presented in "factual" form, and rarely in the guise of literature. On the contrary, positive Jewish characters continued to appear in Soviet writing even at the height of the postwar anti-Semitic purges.[103] One should bear this in mind when considering Anatolii Rybakov's Heavy Sands,

a saga of a Jewish family spanning a period from the turn of the century, though the early years of the Soviet regime, the Nazi Holocaust, and down to the post-Stalin years. Rybakov's novel features a large number of positively portrayed Jewish characters--as well as Jewish villains--and its message is inoffensive enough: the Jews are really no better or worse than other people.[104] That Rybakov's very ordinary novel attracted international attention is itself eloquent commentary on the manner that subject matter of Jewish interest is ordinarily depicted in Soviet media. Less attention was given in the fall of 1980 to Alexander Borshchagovsky's play Ladies' Tailor which describes a Jewish family in Kiev during the night preceding the 1941 massacre at Babi Yar, and is, together with Rybakov's novel, an attempt at an "objective" description of the fate of Soviet Jews during World War II.[105]

It often happens that one major event in a nation's historical experience continues to inspire that nation's creative imagination for decades or even centuries, almost to the exclusion of other, no less momentous events.

Prior to World War II, the single event that served as Soviet literature's chief inspiration was, unquestionably, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the Civil War that ensued. At present, the little of new Soviet writing that is inspired by those events usually has its appearance pegged to anniversary celebrations, such as the sixtieth year of the Soviet state in 1977. Mikhail Bubennov, the unbendingly orthodox novelist referred to earlier, published his childhood reminiscences of the Civil War in Siberia and of the heroic Red Guards in the militant journal of the Young Communist League.[106]

Similar events--and similar Siberian settings--are portrayed in Sergei

Zalygin's Commission which was published in two paperback volumes, each with a press run of 1,600,000. The novel's dedication to the memory of Aleksandr Tvardovskii may well have had less to do with Tvardovskii's stewardship of Novyi mir in its post-Stalin liberal phase than with his 1936 long narrative poem The Land of Muraviya, which provoked some rumblings about Tvardovskii's alleged peasant anarchist proclivities. In Zalygin's work we find an account of a Siberian village in which, after a temporary defeat of Communist forces by the Whites, the peasants simply rule themselves. They are doing quite well, indeed, and even manage to protect local forests and wildlife from poachers. The details about mindless cruelty of the Whites may well have been inserted in the work to compensate for the ideologically dubious account of peasant self rule.[107] The only other work with a predominantly Civil War setting was an unfinished novel by Vsevolod Kochetov, the standard bearer of Stalinism among Soviet writers, who died in 1973. Kochetov's posthumous work was intended as a novelistic account of Soviet history from the Revolution until Lenin's death in 1924. Its cast of characters included such arch-villains as Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev and their "allies," the Mensheviks and, incongruously, the monarchists. Their nefarious schemes, however, were to be foiled by the Soviet secret police.[108]

During the first post-Stalin decade, reminiscences of the relatively liberal and intellectually vibrant 1920's were among favorite subjects in Soviet writing. Between 1976 and 1980 there were, it seems, only a few chapters by two of the remaining survivors of literary life of that decade, the novelists Valentin Katayev and Venyamin Kaverin.[109] Instead, more attention was devoted to steely Bolshevik military leaders and Party bosses of those years, such as Frunze and Kirov.[110] In startling contrast to the post-Stalin "thaws", only fleeting references were found here and there to

the great Purges. Indeed, the years preceding the outbreak of World War II in 1941 provided the background for one major propagandistic collective farm novel and for large sections of two others.[111] Finally, in 1978 Aleksandr Chakovskii, the influential editor-in-chief of Literaturnaya gazeta, published the first book of what promises to be the Soviet counterpart of Upton Sinclair's Lanny Budd novels of World War II fame. The work's central character, a wise, courageous and experienced Soviet diplomat, reminisces about many of his earlier assignments that took him to virtually every large city in Western Europe and in America. There are flashbacks to Berlin in 1945, memories of Roosevelt, of America's Manhattan Project, and of anti-Soviet intrigues that were foiled at the last moment. Stalin is recalled with fondness and awe, while Truman and Churchill are remembered as odious figures noted for duplicity and malice.[112]

8. Thou Shalt Remember the War

Thirty-odd years after the end of hostilities, World War II continues to inspire hundreds of new Soviet short stories, film scripts, novels, memoirs, essays, plays, documentary chronicles, poems and probably every other kind of writing known to literature. The impression is strengthened by the process of reading--as this writer did--day after day, successive issues of Soviet literary periodicals for the late 1970's. Frequently it seemed that not a single issue of any Soviet publication was allowed to see the light of day without at least some item--if not a full-length novel, then at least some verses, a book review, even occasional notes--that immortalizes the travail and heroism of the Soviet army, its leaders and ordinary soldiers, the sacrifices of civilians in the hinterlands, the price that was paid for victory. It is as if a mass concerted effort were underway not to allow the war to be forgotten, now that in the 1970's and 1980's only middle-aged men and women have any personal memories of the war at all, and soon only

the old will be able to recall it.

With the passage of time, an ever decreasing proportion of authors writing about World War II have vivid first-hand recollection of it; yet the sheer bulk of writing dealing with the subject does not seem to be decreasing at all. To be sure, there is--to begin with the obvious--much drama in the subject, and national as well as family memories are sufficiently fresh to keep the level of interest high. At the same time, stories of the war deal with the one event in all of Soviet history during which official and popular goals and aspirations coincided most closely. Hence, literature dealing with the subject of World War II is more sincere and honest. It has less need of contrivance than Soviet writing set in different periods, although, it goes without saying, personal memories do not necessarily coincide with formal historical accounts. To add to confusion, the official Soviet chronicles, to say nothing of interpretations, undergo frequent revisions. And yet, when all is said and done, certain truths remain unquestioned. For whatever reasons, after early reversals and adequate opportunity to observe the Nazis at close range, the Soviet nation was united as never before or after in its readiness to bleed and suffer until the final victory.

These considerations may explain continued popular demand for this type of reading matter and also authors' readiness to supply it. Nevertheless, a few words should be added about the possible reasons for the authorities' approval--indeed, encouragement--of the dissemination of writing, theater and cinema concerned with events of World War II.

It is very probable that Soviet leadership is interested in perpetuating memories of the war because such memories contribute to national cohesion. They counteract any pacifist sentiments and tendencies to question the need for continued high level of military preparedness, whatever the

cost to the population, however adverse its effect on the nation's standard of living. Memories of the war serve to justify relative austerity, continued need for discipline and, in a broad sense, an authoritarian system of government. In short, memories of World War II that are kept alive in part by a steady outpouring of literary material serve a function that is in many respects analogous to that which was served prior to the war by the doctrine of "capitalist encirclement." The lesson of both is continued need for vigilance.

No useful purpose would be served by relating in detail the contents of the scores of novels with wartime settings. Most have several features in common. They describe actual combat and depict varying degrees of heroism and devotion among Soviet soldiers. Their Nazi enemies are cardboard figures; no serious attempt is ever made to show the reader Nazi soldiers as human beings, even if driven by criminal ideas. A great many of such novels were written by relatively unknown authors.[113] Others were the work of established writers.[114] The author of one new book about World War II was not a professional writer at all. Leonid I. Brezhnev's memoirs were awarded the Lenin Prize in the category of literature, a distinction richly deserved in the estimate of some Soviet critics; opinions abroad were understandably more restrained.[115]

Some of the works with war settings stand somewhat apart from the others because of one feature or another. While most, as already mentioned, described actual battlefields, a few did not. One documentary, for instance, related the martyrdom of Leningrad during the long siege of that city;[116] another described a young amputee on his way home;[117] a few told of the impact of the war on distant villages, far from the combat zone.[118] Occasionally the war was but one period in the annals of a village, from the Revolution to the present, presented by the author as Soviet history itself

compressed into a single case study.[119] Most of the works dealing with the war were fiction; a few, however, featured historical figures or autobiographical accounts.[120]

A few described Russian emigres, and in the four works in which the emigres were referred to more than fleetingly, there was a noteworthy differentiation between the "old" and the "new" emigres. The former, who had left the USSR in the aftermath of the Revolution were often described positively while those who left during World War II were invariably portrayed as villains. Irina Guro's novel contrasts the two: the tsarist officers and aristocrats may be ridiculous as Parisian taxi drivers and performers in pseudo-Russian night clubs, but they honestly long for the land of their birth and resolutely refuse to collaborate with the Nazis. On the other hand, former soldiers from the collaborationist Vlasov army who had betrayed the Soviet cause are, not surprisingly, depicted as scum of the earth.[121] A documentary novel by Rita Rait-Kovaleva, the octogenarian Soviet translator of J. D. Salinger and Kurt Vonnegut, told the story of Boris Vil'de, a son of White Russian emigres, who joined the French Communist Party and the anti-Nazi resistance, dying a hero's death.[122] Indeed, from time to time readers are warned against former Nazi collaborators who, protected by their new American, Canadian or Australian passports, now occasionally return to their ancestral Russian homes to haunt their erstwhile neighbors.[123]

In keeping with current Soviet versions of history, literary accounts of the war frequently depict Stalin with much admiration as a wise and steadfast commander-in-chief. Such portrayals may be found in several novels. That the author of one of them is Aleksandr Chakovskii, the editor of Literaturnaya gazeta referred to earlier, imparts to such attitudes an air of official encouragement.[124] Keeping alive memories of World War II

is the subject of Yurii Avdeyenko's short novel about a schoolteacher's determination to organize a museum dedicated to the war, and Yurii Pilyar's semi-fictional essay describing a reunion of survivors of Nazi camps at which Soviet delegates call on their former comrades to combat neo-Fascism.[125]

We have come across only one short story describing life in the armed forces prior to the war, the childhood reminescences of Yurii Geiko, whose father was an air force officer.[126] By contrast, present-day military settings are not uncommon. As other works describing occupations involving adventure (say, deep sea fishing or prospecting) such writings are designed to help young people in the choice of a profession. In the case of fiction describing peacetime armed forces, there is also the consideration mentioned earlier in connection with writing dealing with World War II, i.e., the belief that the generation of Soviet men and women with no personal memories of the war must be kept aware of the need to keep the powder dry.

Nearly all branches of service were represented. To mention a random few: Vyacheslav Marchenko had two novels published within a year or so of each other in the same journal, both describing life in peacetime Soviet navy and containing references to that navy's glorious traditions.[127] The army served as the setting of another novel. Its central protagonist, an army cadet, becomes a political officer.[128] There were also accounts of space flight training, of a navy medical school, and of work in ballistics, weapons development and military engineering in general.[129] Finally, a novel and a novella portrayed life in the present-day Soviet air force.[130] The novel was quite ordinary in most respects. Yurii Nikitin's novella, on the other hand, was, for a Soviet work describing the armed forces, quite unusual. Far from glamorizing life in the air force, it depicted its daily routine as rather drab and unattractive. Instead of an "upbeat" and cheerful love story, it told the story of an air force officer who wants

to marry a woman quite unworthy of him. A mere dishwasher, she is his social inferior, and she is also promiscuous. Yet, even this reality is a few cuts above what the officer's mother believes it to be. Her notions of life in the Soviet air force are based on Alexander Kuprin's The Duel, a depressing account of the Imperial Russian army that appeared early in this century and was highly popular with all detractors of the tsarist military establishment.

And yet, for all its honest realism, Nikitin's novella cannot be considered an anti-militaristic or pacifist work. To this writer's knowledge, no such work has ever been allowed to appear in the USSR--unless, of course, its setting is not Soviet. Nor, it appears, has there ever been a satire aimed at the Soviet armed forces which might, however indirectly, encourage such moods. Vladimir Voinovich's magnificent lampoon of the Soviet military, Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin, though set entirely during the Stalin era and in peacetime at that, has been circulating in samizdat since the mid-1960's, but was never allowed to be legally published. Indeed, by the end of 1980 its author was forced to emigrate.

9. In Search of the Exotic

Notwithstanding the great variety of natural settings of Imperial Russia's vast expanse--from deserts and sub-tropics to the permafrost zone, to say nothing of its rich mix of races and tongues, and the Siberian frontier--prerevolutionary Russia produced few books dealing with adventure and travel. There is a further puzzle in the failure of Russia, a country bordering on the Arctic, the Pacific and smaller bodies of water to produce any appreciable body of writing about the sea. (One author of great novels about the sea was born a Russian citizen in what was then Russia: Joseph Conrad.) To compensate for the paucity of such books by their countrymen, Russians have traditionally been avid readers of such authors as Jack London

and Jules Verne. Indeed, these writers remain to this day far more widely read in the USSR than they are in their native lands.

Soviet Russian authors have been--with considerable official encouragement--trying to rectify this neglect. Books with what are to the vast majority of Soviet readers exotic settings make for educational and interesting reading. Furthermore, such literary works offer an opportunity for vicarious travel. This is an important attraction to citizens of the one major industrial country where private ownership of automobiles--and hence opportunities for individual domestic travel--is still greatly restricted, while only a handful of privileged citizens can realistically hope to venture abroad. The works we shall examine below often have a curiously old-fashioned flavor that is strongly reminiscent of eighteenth and nineteenth century British, French and American books of similar kinds. Unfamiliar settings and, more importantly, ways of life are viewed from the vantage-point of an observer who is firmly convinced of the superiority of his own way of life, of his technological skills and, perhaps even more importantly (in a parallel to the "civilized" views in earlier Europe and America), of his Soviet values. Primitive natives are examined with curiosity and kindness, but always with condescension. The possibility is never even raised that any aspect of their way of life--say, simplicity or indifference to status--may actually deserve emulation. Hence, Soviet books of travel and adventure in unfamiliar surroundings within the USSR (and, on rare occasions, abroad) are filled with the same "colonialist" ethos as the works of Rudyard Kipling (still very widely read in the USSR) or old-fashioned American Westerns.

Siberia is Russia's frontier, and some of the Soviet tales set in Siberia bear strong resemblance to earlier American tales of stubborn and courageous pioneers braving inhospitable nature. There is, however, a

difference. In American fiction, Indians are often described as hostile to the intruders. In contrast, as a rule, Soviet fiction presents Eskimos and Siberian aborigines as grateful for the blessings of civilization and the Soviet way of life brought in by the Communist pioneers.

Hunters, trappers, fishermen and Eskimoes are viewed against the background of swift rivers, virgin forests and frozen tundra in Victor Astaf'ev's Kingfish already mentioned in this study. Indeed, these parts of the work are its chief attraction; man's isolation is underscored by the majesty of nature. Following its publication in a journal, Astaf'ev's novel was brought out as a paperback in 1,600,000 copies.[131] Rich ethnographic detail, vestiges of animistic Shamanism and class contradictions among the Siberian tribesmen before the Revolution--all of which he knows at first-hand--are the chief attraction of Yuvan Shestalov's Russian novels; his descriptions of reindeer collective farms are less interesting.[132] Unfamiliar flora and fauna and mysterious Eskimos captivate urban readers in Yuri Sbitnev's novella about a geological survey in the Far North, while Nikolai Shundik's The White Shaman--though similarly rich in exotic detail--is a long novel primarily perceived as an account of the successful efforts of European Russians to bring the Siberian Eskimos the twin blessings of industrial civilization and the Soviet political system.[133] There is now, indeed, at least one Soviet novelist, Vladimir Sanin, who "specializes" in Arctic settings. He is the author of a trilogy entitled The Call of the Arctic Heights and other works on similar subjects; one of these was printed in 1,600,000 copies.[134]

Fazil Iskander, a rather nonconformist novelist of Abkhaz origin, writes in Russian about his native Caucasus, its lush natural surroundings, the sparkling and warm sea, and picturesque characters, comical and dignified at the same time. The full unabridged text of Iskander's novel Sandro

from Chegem could not be published in the USSR (the book was printed abroad), but some of his other writings have appeared in Soviet journals.[135] Other works which are primarily of interest because of their exotic couleur local include Boris Ryakhovsky's description of a bleak little town in the Kazakh steppes; Alexander Rusov's semi-documentary tale set in part in Uzbekistan and in Armenia; and the late Alexander Polyakov's novella about a Soviet ship, the crew of which consists of Bashkirs and other non-Slavs.[136] Valentin Makhonin's novel combined central Asian settings with elements of a thriller, while Anatolii Ferenchuk's was an obvious imitation of Mikhail Sholokhov's Virgin Soil Upturned. It describes, with much emphasis on ethnographic detail, the life and customs of the Don Cossacks during the collectivization, and also shows that class antagonisms stand in the way of marital bliss.[137] Two authors took their readers abroad. Yakov Khelemsky wrote of his impressions of Spain (with some flashbacks to the Spanish Civil War), while Victor Konetsky's log book of a Soviet merchant vessel took its readers as far as Brazil.[138]

There are occasional works where Man, if present at all, is completely overshadowed by Nature. Such are, for instance, Vl. Gusev's stories about a wildlife preserve, Boris Sergunenkov's meditations about plants, animals and the seasons, and Vasilii Peskov's Turgenev-like canvases of still life with occasional very effective human types.[139] Anatolii Tkachenko wrote an effective short novel about a Robinson Crusoe experiment of sorts. A few Soviet people from a large city wish to find out how they would manage by themselves in the wilderness of Sakhalin, an island off Siberia's Pacific coast. And though most of them discover they could not survive for long, they are grateful for the experience which, among other things, afforded them an opportunity for meditation, a luxury they can never afford in normal conditions.[140]

Not unexpectedly, the opportunity to probe human minds and hearts when these are free from societal pressures and conventions attracted also a number of the country's major authors. Thus, Yurii Kazakov, one of Russia's best younger writers of short stories, has in recent years turned with increasing frequency to the Far North and its lonely fishermen, hunters, sailors and pilots who almost daily do battle with the region's ferocious elements. A fine collection of such stories by Kazakov was printed in 1977 in 1,600,000 copies, as were two stories by Chingiz Aitmatov, another leading writer.[141] Aitmatov's tale, entitled "A Skewbald Dog Running by the Seashore," describes an older man and a boy lost in dense fog at sea in a fishing boat, with no food and very little drinking water; the story bears a strong imprint of Ernest Hemingway, particularly of The Old Man and the Sea, very popular in the USSR in the 1960's. Finally, there was the moving story "Vasilii and Vasilisa" by Valentin Rasputin.[142] The story describes a married couple in the Siberian wilderness who, having become estranged, are not on speaking terms, but continue to live in adjacent houses in the forest. Reconciliation comes only when the husband is on his deathbed.

10. Some Are More Equal Than Others

In prerevolutionary Russia, as in other European countries at the time, there was a sub-species of the dime novel that purported to describe, and with intimate details at that, the private life of the high and the mighty. It goes without saying that the authors of such velikosvetskie romany--novels of high society--rarely knew their subject and settings from personal observation. But this mattered little: neither did their readers who were, for the most part, uneducated men and women of modest circumstances and possessed of what could be described as a prurient desire to learn what goes on in the living rooms (and, if at all possible, bedrooms

as well) of the fancy houses behind the tall fences, guarded by dogs and made further inaccessible by servants. For decades now members of the Soviet privileged classes, those who, as George Orwell put it, are--in an ostensibly egalitarian society--more equal than others, have led private lives far less visible to ordinary mortals than were the lives of prerevolutionary aristocrats and millionaires. Not only do those who belong to the Soviet elite live in separate housing, they also eat in separate restaurants, shop in "closed" stores, receive treatment in special hospitals and vacation in restricted resorts. That there is intense curiosity about their mysterious comings and goings is only natural, and promise to gratify, if only in part, this curiosity was one of the few attractions of otherwise boring potboilers of the Stalin era. Vera Dunham writes:

> Popular fiction [between the end of the war and Stalin's death- MF] was entrusted with another important function. It offered to those in the lower regions of society the only possible glimpse of the life of the powerful and the privileged above them. To the populace, even a run-of-the-mill district party secretary seemed a potentate. The description of such a VIP's daily travails and especially of his love and family pleasures and vicissitudes, with details of top-drawer kulturnost' kept the mass reader spellbound. It was exotic reading matter, fascinating in a way not readily understood in another society. It impinged on the vital interests and aspirations of the mass reader.[143]

In 1975-80 popular Soviet fiction no longer identified privilege with political power alone. Indeed, cases of such identification were distinctly in the minority. A few were referred to earlier in our discussion of the Positive Hero. We do not intend to imply that Soviet writing for mass consumption is necessarily an accurate reflection of social realities, and that middle ranking Communist Party officials no longer belong to the privileged elite. It may, indeed, be that authors are simply more comfortable associating privilege with social groups <u>other</u> than Communist Party bureaucracy, <u>because by thus depoliticizing privilege they feel more at liberty to criticize its abuse by members of the elite</u>. Be that as it may, the

district Party secretary (or other Communist functionary) referred to by Vera Dunham no longer symbolizes privilege in Soviet fiction. Exceptions only serve to underscore this change. The first is Anan'ev's novel Years Without War that was discussed earlier in another connection.[144] There are not one but two district Party secretaries in it, a retired one from the Stalin era, and one currently occupying that post. Both are shown as decent and competent enough, but neither man was ever very good in managing family affairs (the younger was once married to the older man's daughter). True, the older man's wife was once too fond of material possessions, but it is the younger generation that has been corrupted to a greater degree. Their prosperity has reached the level where they hanker after objects that have value because of their snob appeal alone. Thus the old Party secretary's son, otherwise himself a good party member, a chip off the old block, now associates with social climbers who collect dogs with fancy foreign pedigrees.[145] Otherwise, senior Party or economic officials, far from wallowing in luxury, deserve our compassion: they are being used by unscrupulous women! Thus, in Georgii Semyonov's novella, an unmarried and honorable middle-aged Soviet executive must, at first, fight off the advances of his very young secretary who wants him for a husband or a lover--it does not really matter which. He begs off on the grounds of age. The secretary then marries a man her age, has a son by him, and then seduces the poor old man, and continues to cultivate him even after the affair is over, and for a despicalbe reason, too: she wants to be the sole beneficiary in his will.[146] Another middle-aged executive, by contrast, loses his mistress who decides, for her child's sake, to make up with her ex-husband. As if this were not enough, the lovesick gentleman is not even allowed to forget women altogether. He is called upon to mediate in marital squabbles, allay suspicions of (justly) jealous wives, and so forth.[147] The height of

indignity is reported in Petr Proskurin's long novel.[148] The story portrays an adultress who is the wife of an important Communist Party functionary of the old Stalinist kind. As an excuse for her errant behavior, the woman explains that her husband, a workaholic, has no time for her and she feels neglected. The manner in which the woman presents her argument is clearly designed to elicit sympathy for her plight. The incident would have been all but unthinkable in a Soviet novel of the Stalin era. In those days, wives of workaholics in Soviet fiction tended to sublimate their frustration in socially useful endeavors. Proskurin's novel shows dangerous influences of Anna Karenina, an earlier Russian novel about an overworked senior civil servant and how his selfless efforts for his country were repaid by a seductive wife with time on her hands. Readers will recall that having no job and being able, furthermore, to leave the care of her house and child to servants, she began to carry on with an army officer.

Popular Soviet Russian literature of 1976-80 does not portray any particular social class as the repository of power or, for that matter, substantial wealth. What it does depict is what nowadays in America might be called desirable "quality of life," a pleasurable "lifestyle," a way of life that stands in startling contrast to that of the huge majority of popular Soviet fiction's readers. Most readers have drab jobs; the jobs of the privileged are fascinating. Readers never get to go anywhere; the privileged travel constantly, and abroad at that. Readers must count their pennies; the privileged have all the money they could possibly need. Readers are unable to get prized foreign-made goods; the privileged get all the Western trinkets one can think of. Readers are, essentially, unexcitingly monogamous; the privileged have several spouses in a lifetime, to say nothing of extramarital flings. In short, ordinary readers lead a boring existence; the privileged lead a life of pleasure (even if also some pain), but certainly a life of

glamor and of excitement. The two groups in Soviet society shown to have access to this alluring lifestyle are a part of the scientific establishment and, to a considerably lesser extent, some segments of the artistic world. Let us consider a few such accounts of the glamorous world of chic scientists.

Soviet scientists are shown working side by side with foreign colleagues and may be approaching a breakthrough in nuclear fission. The cliffhanger quality of the novel which related this story was, needless to say, enhanced by the claim that it was based on actual events.[149] Paradoxically, a very similar effect was achieved by a novel about Soviet biologists which included a disclaimer (common in the West but rare in the USSR) that any similarity to specific recent events in biology was purely coincidental: why the disclaimer unless real events in biology were described?[150] Venyamin Kaverin, a Soviet writer whose reputation for skillful spinning of verbal yarns goes back to the 1920's, produced a short novel about intrigues in a research institute where bureaucrats claim credit for work done by scientists too busy with their work to be concerned with publicity, with chaos further confounded by love triangles.[151] Disorderly love-lives, rivalries and intrigues interfere with the normal work of other research enterprises as well. Thus, the middle aged bachelor in a novel about an institute for the study of ice, freezing and thawing (low temperatures?) would probably be content doing his research and seeking contracts from Soviet industry. But that is not to be. The unassuming man is pursued by an uneducated and much younger woman who believes he is a much better catch than her rather primitive boyfriend (incidentally, the novel strongly emphasizes the social distance between the two men).[152] And the important and engrossing work of an unmarried biologist is made very difficult indeed by his many romantic entanglements. At the age of thirty-two, he has not one mistress, but two. He marries neither, choosing yet a third woman. Still, even marriage and a brilliant career (he soon

becomes a general of the army's medical corps!) cannot calm his ardor: he continues to pine after both of his old flames. The fact of the matter is that his is not different from the loveless marriages of his colleagues that lead, one after another, to messy divorces. And like the rest of them, he must contend with lazy secretaries, incompetent and complaining subordinates, and socialize only with people of roughly his own social rank. (That friendships between people of different ranks are not tolerated is emphasized again and again, bringing to mind Chekhov's "The Fat and the Skinny.") To top it all off, the scientist-turned-general must also pretend to be fond of Tschaikovsky's music and of Turgenev's novels, even though he despises both, and must feign interest in sports records.[153]

Obviously, membership in the upper crust of the world of science, in the science jet set, so to speak, has its rewards as well. Because of his status as a semi-professional swimmer, an otherwise ordinary engineer has a romance with an Intourist guide, a species of Soviet womanhood otherwise accessible only to foreigners and therefore, presumably, particularly desirable. Readers then get to meet other men like the swimmer engineer, and to see for themselves what status can bring. Not only do they smoke imported Chesterfield cigarettes, but instead of living in dorms or other ordinary housing, like plain Soviet unmarried engineers, they actually have bachelor apartments of their own, which they shamelessly use for immoral purposes.[154] Being a highly successful architect also has its advantages. There is no need to slug it out in the open with a rival for a lady's favors: one can always pretend to be in disagreement over this or another method of housing construction. There are fringe benefits too: international congresses, entertaining visitors from abroad and so forth.[155] It stands to reason, therefore, that those most privileged are people who travel to Western Europe regularly and routinely receive foreign guests. Such is,

for instance, a small circle of Moscow's most successful academics. Their bookshelves are crowded with foreign books and encyclopedias which not only contain articles by them, but about them as well. Naturally, they eat fancy foods and drink imported liquors. Moreover, the love lives of these people were probably meant to titillate Soviet readers: why, these shameless scientists are brazen enough to openly flirt with each other's spouses.[156]

That the existence in the USSR of censorship and of state monopoly in publishing restricts the availability to that country's citizenry of factual information and of a variety of opinions is well known. Fewer people are aware that these also deprive them of juicy gossip. Not a single column of the commodity is to be found in any of the country's newspapers, to say nothing of magazines devoted to reporting on the comings and goings of celebrities. It is therefore likely that many Soviet readers consider it fortunate that popular fiction occasionally comes to the rescue and attempts to fill the void.

As any reader of Gogol's Inspector General knows, even Russians who are not intellectuals view writers as celebrities and are eager for some morsels of inside information about their lives. One recent Soviet novel and one novella attempt to satisfy this curiosity.[157] Painters are of interest, too, though perhaps to a lesser degree, and Sergei Krutilin's potboiler is one of the few efforts at describing this milieu.[158] Because of that, perhaps we should summarize some of its highlights. Painters, we learn, are like everybody else: those who really amount to anything in their field occupy administrative positions. And all the nonsense we hear about bohemian morals may be true of bourgeois painters, but not of good Soviet ones. The Soviet painter in Krutilin's novel (skeptics may consult page 51!) has never seen a naked woman in his life--except one--a model at the Institute of Fine Arts. He uses the latter information to convince his

girlfriend that painters are like doctors, and it's perfectly all right to strip naked for them. The girl finds the logic persuasive, and thereafter Krutilin's novel picks up speed.

Apparently, the Soviet film world is different. In M. Ganina's generally sensitive and literate novella, a movie actress of modest gifts describes her own marriage to a man of less than average intelligence whom she likes but does not love. It is her father, a sentimental old fool, married and divorced three times, who now has a varied love life. Women use him but he does not seem to mind. But then, the narrator's mother was unfaithful to her father and her own former lovers were no knights in shining armor. The actress then relates the usual gossip--who is sleeping with whom, who is still married to whom, and who is in the process of divorce. Of her friends, it was the most promiscuous girl, also addicted to obscene language, who married the most successful man. All in all, in Ganina's poignant novella the "glamorous" people who smile on the reader from the silver screen, as well as those who write, direct and shoot the film, turn out to lead rather pathetic lives. The one sensational tidbit in the novella is the otherwise unavailable information on some of the tricks that are used by aging actresses to appear younger.[159]

Since, in contrast to popular fiction of the Stalin era, most of the privileged characters in recent Soviet fiction enjoy pleasures and amenities that are inaccessible to others without also enjoying much power over those less fortunate, we are not shown how power corrupts. (Luxury and privilege "spoil", a less reprehensible effect.) We do, however, encounter from time to time children of those whom Milovan Djilas had called "the new class," the ruling elite of the USSR. As a rule such offspring, while benefiting at first from its parents' privileged position, eventually discovers that there is also a price to be paid for it. In one of Lazar' Karelin's short

stories, for instance, the granddaughter of a famous Soviet general in World War II complains that she is never treated as an autonomous human being, but always as the relative of a celebrity. In fact, she even resents her husband because he was presented to her as the best bridegroom available.[160] An analogous situation is described by Boris Shustov, except that here the girl's father opposes a match because the young man, an ordinary worker, is not prominent enough for him. And when, some years later, the young man--now a desirable catch--returns, the father, fearful that he may break up the daughter's marriage, offers the young man money on condition he leave.[161] The most frightening portrait of a child born to power and privilege is that of a son of a Stalinist secret police officer in Yurii Trifonov's powerful novel The House on the Embankment.[162] As a boy, he oscillated between bullying those weaker than himself (he had once threatened to rape his teacher!) and having the full power of his father's awesome employer descend in retribution on schoolteachers who had incurred his displeasure. At the end of the novel we see him again, this time as a pitiful derelict. The success of Trifonov's novel probably inspired the close imitation that was published less than two years later: it, too, showed an arrogant son of a secret policeman named Felix (probably in honor of Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the father's organization).[163]

In all the literary works examined, we have come across only a single open expression of resentment of inequality and privilege. One of the novels relates how, during World War II, a soldier on home leave discovers a villa not far from his native village in Eastern Siberia. The villa is protected by a guard, but the soldier catches a glimpse of an elegantly dressed woman who apparently lives there. The soldier's anger was obviously compounded by the fact that this ostentatious opulence was allowed to exist in wartime, and it is perhaps this last consideration that made possible

the publication of the scene.[164]

11. In Quest of a Code of Ethics

Even allowing for the fact that most Soviet authors, and particularly authors of popular fiction, tended to shun all social concerns, it is nevertheless true that justice--concrete demands of social justice and justice for the individual--was a central concern of Soviet Russian literature of the post-Stalin "thaw." Crimes and wrongdoings, it insisted, must not only cease, but amends must be made to their victims. This principle was emphatically extended to misdeeds committed in the name of once hallowed ideas and causes--to arrests, exile and executions sanctioned by claims that these were required to advance the Soviet cause or insure its safety. The more courageous authors suggested even institutional reforms if these were needed to guarantee that similar abuses would never recur. Virtually all who tackled the subject of justice regarded it as an inalienable right, not a privilege, a right one must stand up for if necessary.

All this now seems far away, even though less than two decades have elapsed since the second "thaw." In Soviet Russian writing, popular or highbrow, ringing denunciations of concrete evils and demands of redress that were once so prominent, are now no longer to be found. Such "radical" slogans would not be readily tolerated in the increasingly staid and authoritarian atmosphere of Brezhnev's Russia. Instead, there are abstract pleas for ethics, vague hopes for decency and honesty and even good manners. The reformist literature of the post-Stalin liberal era usually blamed human suffering and even incongruities in daily life on faulty official policies and corrupt institutations or social values. By contrast, comparable writing of the Brezhnev years (often by the same authors!) ascribes much of the responsibility to imperfections of human nature, to timeless human vices, foibles and weaknesses. In so doing, new Russian writing of the last half

dozen years frequently assumes the qualities of fable and of moralizing literature in general. That type of literature--in Russia and elsewhere--has traditionally upheld the socio-political status quo, and its appeals for ethical betterment, for moral self-improvement has traditionally, whatever the author's personal intentions, "objectively" vitiated social change. This was intuitively sensed in the early 1900's by one writer with, perhaps, modest credentials as a literary critic but with unchallenged political acumen. Lenin vigorously objected to this particular feature of Tolstoy's work in an otherwise admiring essay in which the great novelist was hailed as "the mirror of the Russian Revolution." To state it simply: "moral" criticism does not promote sociopolitical change. "Social" criticism does.

That ethics--rather than overt propaganda on behalf of the Soviet cause--is a preeminent concern of much of recent Soviet writing is regretfully acknowledged by Soviet critics. Thus, L. Yershov wrote with disapproval in an article entitled "The Social and Moral: Perusing the Prose of the 1970's": "At present [in the 1970's] attention is focused not on technology but on moral problems. Protagonists of plays and novels are increasingly willing to discuss psychology and ethics, and they openly assail the absence of spiritual values."[165] It may be that Soviet critics of the 1970's acting, as is their wont, as guardians of ideological purity simply lack Lenin's political insight, and do not appreciate the fact that emphasis on "moral" issues is "objectively" much to be desired. It is also possible that--in keeping with Soviet policies in areas other than literature--they are not content to treat writers as partly independent allies, insisting instead on their total submission. Be that as it may, a number of these critics, not content with the "objective" preferability of "moral" criticism which rarely presents any direct challenge to Soviet values and institutions--

as distinct from the "social" which often does--occasionally take rather strong exception to "moral" writing. Thus, in a 1976 survey of recent plays by a number of the country's leading playwrights (among them V. Rozov, M. Roshchin, G. Bokarev, R. and M. Ibragimbekov and Alexander Vampilov) one Soviet critic noted with distress that these new productions feature few recognizable villains whose defeat is to be wished. Instead, the critic complained, the finales tend to be "open ended," implying a possibility of different resolutions of conflicts within an ambiguous "moral" framework.[166] Similarly, a review in Literaturnaya gazeta of October 25, 1978, took to task A. Bocharov, a literary scholar, for having defended, in a recent book, an individual's "immanent" moral potential, independent of morality of a society as a whole.

We thus detect a definite drift in the Soviet critic's objections which may be summarized as follows. That "moral" criticism in Soviet writing is in fact preferred to "social" criticism is not openly acknowledged. Instead, the critics argue that the ambiguity of "moral" criticism be abandoned in favor of a return to the traditional postulates of Stalinist Socialist Realism, namely ideinost', partiinost' and narodnost'. A literary work, they believe, should contain the elements of a social-oriented, politicized idea. An author should not feign neutrality. His sympathies should be made abundantly clear. And a literary work should be written preferably in a simple, accessible form, avoiding language and devices that might obscure its message.

An example of the way these desiderata can be implemented may be found in The Earth's Gravity, a 1978 play by Anatolii Sofronov, a leader (together with the late Vsevolod Kochetov) of the ultra-Stalinist and anti-liberal forces during the Khrushchev "thaw." (The two, by the way, appear under their own names in Abram Tertz's novel The Makepeace Experiment.) Sofronov's

play has the ingredients of a real conflict and a plausible dilemma. Briefly stated, the plot is as follows. A World War II ace, now a Soviet air force general writing his memoirs, learns that his daughter is planning to marry. It transpires that her intended is a son of a man who had during the war falsely accused the general of insubordination. This has resulted in a court martial: the accused was stripped of rank and given a suspended jail sentence. On reflection, the general decides that the young man cannot be held responsible for his father's wrongdoings decades before, particularly since he was not even aware of them. What matters is that the young man is himself a model Soviet officer, and the couple receives the general's paternal approval. The real lesson Sofronov wants to bring home is found in the speech the general makes in the play's concluding scene to air force cadets:

> Being an officer means being a member of an exceptionally ideological profession. Those who believe that the imperialists have become even a little bit kinder are dead wrong. It is simply that they have been forced to pay us ever more attention. Every year the imperialists grow more convinced that we are not to be taken lightly.[167]

We do not wish to imply that Anatolii Sofronov's kind of "moral" lesson is now obligatory in Soviet literature. Still, it is worth noting as a useful corrective to our dissident-oriented notions of recent Soviet writing. It is also instructive to remember that time seems now to be on Anatolii Sofronov's side, and not the dissidents'. We shall not refer here merely to the fact that a number of the most prominent dissident Soviet authors of the 1950's and 60's are now forced to live in the West, although this in itself constitutes telling evidence. Instead, we shall examine the writings of five prominent literary periodicals in the late 1970's against the background of their earlier work.

Yurii Bondarev's fame rests primarily on his 1962 novel Silence (Tishina).

In the estimate of Deming Brown, author of the best study of post-Stalin Soviet Russian literature to date, "The novel [Silence] stresses the loneliness, alienation, and frustration of a young man whose wartime habits of stubborn honesty and direct confrontation of injustice do not seem applicable in a peacetime world of secret denunciations, careerism and double-cross."[168] In Boudarev's earlier work moral and ethical issues are clearly stated and demand immediate attention. Not so the 1977 novella. Of the two unworthy traits mentioned, one is to be found within the narrator himself, and therefore cannot be blamed on society, while the other is just too insignificant to evoke indignation. In Moments the narrator is ashamed of himself for flattering a man he dislikes; he then meets the widow of a man now unjustly forgotten, with his services now credited to the men who succeeded him.[169]

Yurii Trifonov's career began in 1956 with The Students, politically an orthodox enough novel. In 1963 he came out with The Quenching of Thirst (Utolenie zhazhdy): "Sections of the narrative take the form of the diary of a young journalist who is obsessed by the injustice done to his father, destroyed in the purges of 1937."[170] The House on the Embankment, discussed earlier, posed a number of vexing moral problems with painfully social overtones. It appeared, to be sure, within the period under consideration in this study, yet we emphatically agree with Deming Brown who notes, "Its publication in 1976 seemed a happy anomaly."[171] By 1978, Trifonov's social and moral concerns have shrunk to a point where these become a problem of manners, of etiquette: a glorious, if blemished, past can be traded in for creature comforts. In his story The Old Man we meet an old man who may have been responsible for the execution during the Civil War of an innocent man. Now all this is history and the old man's grandchildren use the prestige of his revolutionary past to get a summer cottage.[172]

The drastic toning down of ethical probing is also in evidence in Alexander Kron's Insomnia, a novel already referred to in our paper. In 1956 Kron, a playwright repeatedly forced to rewrite his plays (such as Candidate for Membership in the Party) by the Soviet censors, published a long essay, Notes of a Writer (Zametki pisatelya). The essay, an impassioned attack on the institution of censorship, was severely criticized in the Soviet press. In the opinion of Wolfgang Kasack, a leading European student of Soviet literature, even in the 1970's "His [Kron's] Notes of a Writer retain their validity for an understanding of Soviet literature."[173] By 1977, Kron's attention, judging by Insomnia, is drawn by and large to the form rather than substance of ethical, moral and pyschological issues, shunning, when possible, political concerns altogether. He is intrigued, for instance, by the paradox that jealousy or pride may be noble as well as despicable, that modesty may be perverse, etc. The closest we come to concrete issues is the remark that while the Soviet press may insist that crime and unhealthy sexuality are only "exceptions" in the USSR, they exist just the same.[174]

It is hard to believe that a mere fifteen years ago Yevgenii Yevtushenko was the firebrand of anti-Stalinist liberalism, known far and wide within as well as beyond the USSR. Even viewed in retrospect, in Deming Brown's estimate,

> he has to his credit some stunning accomplishments in timely, politically courageous poems. The most remarkable of them is "Babi Yar," a profoundly moving, fierce attack on official Soviet anti-Semitism, but others such as "The Heirs of Stalin" and "Letter to Esenin," are equally brave in their way. In the latter poem, which he recited publicly in the presence of some of those whom he was specifically attacking, he indicted the Komsomol and Party leadership for its dictatorial control over literature, with pointed references to the Stalin terror, which brought death to "millions in the war against the people."[175]

Yevtushenko has since become, by and large, a solid member of the

establishment, but he still relishes on occasion his old role of rebel and nonconformist. Hence, his one nonlyrical poem that appeared in a Soviet journal in 1978 is instructive. Entitled "Ingratiating Oneself," it asks rhetorically, why people attempt to ingratiate themselves with waitresses, hotel clerks and telephone operators, arguing that doing so is undignified and demeaning.[176] Not only is Yevtushenko's poem directed at a human rather than social foible--a complete reversal of his traditional predilections--but the question posed is quite disingenuous. Soviet citizens try to ingratiate themselves with persons enumerated by Yevtushenko because lowly clerks and waitresses can deny them a room, or a meal, or a telephone conversation--and often do. And there is little that an aggrieved customer can do: he is really at their mercy.

Yurii Nagibin, a prose writer far less political than Yevtushenko, nevertheless did in the past denounce such injustices as "material privileges reserved for high Party officials."[177] A collection of Nagibin's stories published in 1980 in two and a half million copies--a record even for the paperback series of Roman gazeta--consists of four novellas (one of them featuring a protagonist modeled, presumably, on Hemingway). Their central idea seems to be an appeal for greater sensitivity to spiritual and ethical considerations--a modest demand, consistent with the general ambience of popular literature of the Brezhnev era.[178]

Of other works raising moral and ethical issues, two chose a safe enough subject--the hypocrisy high school students detect in the way their teachers approach identical problems in books and in real life. Thus, predictably, the same teachers who are in raptures over love stories in novels become alarmed when something of that sort appears to be developing among their pupils; much the same is true of their attitude toward duty, friendship and so forth.[179] In another novel a schoolteacher decides that

if she wants to be respected, she must suppress her natural informal ways and assume a stern demeanor.[180] A more original lesson in mob psychology (and pointing also to dangers in the concept of collective responsibility) is formed in Pyotr Krasnov's story about a stray dog who attacks a schoolboy, whereupon villagers armed with shovels and pitchforks proceed to exterminate all strays.[181] Most unusual, however--because of its message and, even more, its central protagonist--was a poem by Nikolai Starshinov. Judas Iscariot asks Jesus Christ to forgive him, and Christ replies that while he remains in principle committed to the doctrine of forgiveness, he has one exception. He cannot forgive betrayal.[182]

12. Crime and Anti-Social Behavior

In popular Soviet literature of 1976-80 alcoholism emerges as the single most pervasive social problem. It reaches epidemic proportions in several of the novels discussed earlier in another connection, Victor Astaf'ev's Kingfish and Petr Proskurin's Thy Name. In Karpov's short story alcohol slowly destroys a man in his thirties whose heroic work in the Arctic is hailed in a radio broadcast and who is rather wealthy; on leave to his native village, he just drinks for a few months and returns North.[183] Alcoholism is shown as the root of a number of other problems; within the scope of one novella, these include absenteeism, rowdiness, promiscuity and even poor housing.[184] An alcoholic, in a novel, is unjustly suspected of theft because, the reasoning goes, he could not otherwise support the habit.[185] And alocholism is the force that moves The Reckoning, a 1979 thriller by Vladimir Tendryakov, a leading Soviet prose writer. The work, incidentally, is definitely one of the best Soviet whodunits ever--although it is true that there have not been too many.[186] Briefly, a boy murders his father, an alcoholic. The police then question two of the dead man's subordinates, both also alcoholics.[187] At the end of the story (should we

give away the ending?) it is hinted that the murdered man's boss wanted to keep the deceased dependent on him. One sure way to do it was to keep him drunk. And this could be best assured by surrounding him with alcoholics. And yet, one obvious reason for the magnitude of the problem is the ready availability of realtively cheap vodka. This much is suggested--jokingly, to be sure—by a protagonist in a novel by the staunch Stalinist Semen Babayevskii.[188] It seems that on one state farm some doctrinal eager beavers

> have all but reached Communism. They got rid of locks and watchmen and nobody stole anything from the barns. They got rid of cashiers in the store and the cafeteria and not a kopeck was lost. People became honest and their ideological consciousness went up. They became an example for the others. They even stopped selling vodka, or drinking the stuff--that's how far things had gone.

Another of Babayevsky's protagonists is not convinced, believing that the experiment was, at the very least, premature. After all, he explains, vodka is distilled by Soviet factories. These factories are expected to meet their production quotas. If people suddenly quit drinking, the Soviet state would be losing money.[189]

Tendryakov's was not the only novel dealing with violent crime. Zoya Boguslavskaya's was another; it described an allegedly real life trial of a man charged with stealing a car after beating its owner to unconsciousness.[190] Yurii Sbitnev related the story of a model worker in jail for assaulting a man who had charged him with being the father of his child.[191] And Anatolii Afanas'yev's novella portrayed a working class neighborbood not too different from that found in the writings of Britain's Angry Young Man three decades ago. The young Russian workers are bored, there are fistfights, ruffians attack people in the streets, and a waitress in a cafe for foreigners steals foods that are difficult to obtain elsewhere.[192]

Theft of state property is occasionally referred to in several works,[193]

but large-scale embezzlement is not. One exception is Vil' Lipatov's And That Is All About Him which was published in a two-volume paperback at 1,600,000 per set.[194] Among many upright and hard-working lumbermen somewhere in Siberia there is, it seems, one black sheep. By doctoring the books he manages to embezzle large amounts of money which he uses to build for himself an ostentatious house, the kind rich merchants had before 1917. Ultimately, the criminal is exposed by a brave young Communist aided by a resourceful police investigator.

Black marketeers are shown in Nikolai Voronov's novel buying up shoes in one city and selling them in another. Obviously, the crooks were influenced by foreign ideology. Says one of them to a lady friend, "I'll be a businessman, and you a businesswoman, and we'll live like the Rockefellers."[195] Ivan Yevseyenko's novella describes the "grey" area of what is now known in the West as the Soviet Union's "second economy." A farmer takes thirty sacks of onions to the North, where they are worth a lot of money; this, in itself, is legal enough. Once there, however, he gets involved with real black marketeers engaged in illegal sale of merchandise. Farmers from various parts of the country are shown selling their produce. Readers are shown lenient police who are, presumably, to blame for the black market's existence.[196] Victor Popov's fine 1976 novella relates the tale of a woman in Siberia whose state-owned horse dies. Because she is held responsible for the animal's death, she must reimburse the state for the loss. Only by having her estranged husband and two other men come up with the money can she escape going to jail.[197] Popov's story is a close imitation of the plot and the setting of Valentin Rasputin's beautiful tale Money for Maria which first appeared in 1967, and which was reprinted in 1976 in a paperback with a press run of 1,600,000 copies.[198]

Legal problems in industrial settings were dealt with in a novella and

a full-length novel. The latter describes in considerable detail the kind of cases Soviet attorneys handle, including negligence, theft, traffic violations, assault and battery, and crimes of passion.[199] And in the only novel to depict at any length life in a Soviet prison, the inmates are not--as they were in similar works printed during the thaw--innocent political prisoners. They are convicted felons, guilty as charged.[200]

13. The Sexual Revolution

A case can be made for the claim that the Soviet Union's true sexual revolution occurred in the early 1920's, when Alexandra Kollontai's "glass of water" theory reigned supreme, a doctrine which reduced all sexuality to the level of the quenching of thirst.[201] That was followed by a quarter of a century of what could be called--if currently fashionable terminology were used--sexual repression, a period coinciding with Stalin's rule. During these years sex was no more successfully abolished than it had been in Victorian England. It is simply that it was declared inconsonant with Communist values (a counterpart of sorts to old England's polite society) and banished from public view, literary output included. It returned, little by little, following the dictator's death.

There are still some taboos: homosexuality, for instance, is not portrayed--it is still a legal offense--and, by modern Western standards, Soviet literature still clings to standards of decorum. But while descriptions may not be very explicit and the language is very proper, the Soviet society of the 1970's that is being described in Soviet literature is not Victorian at all. After an interruption of three decades, the Soviet sexual revolution is with us again, and it is reflected in recent writing which often views it, not surprisingly, with very strong disapproval as part of an overall moral decline.

One short story contains a Soviet variant of a rather traditional tale

of a farmer's daughter ruined by the city. She grew tired of attending school and living on her meager allowance from home, and became a waitress and a slut.[202] A coarse predatory female of thirty-two, not very good looking and twenty pounds overweight, is the central protagonist of a novella by Viktoriya Tokareva.[203] She is husband-hunting, explaining that she's interested in men under the age of eighty-two, but is also willing to consider teenagers: "Nowadays husbands young enough to be one's sons are in fashion."[204] The woman meets a married man at a resort, has a brief affair, gets him to propose, but cannot stand his dog. And so it appears that she won't marry him--or, for that matter, her other current lover--but will continue her search.

Naturally, it is the young who are the worst offenders in their casual view of sex. A divorced man of forty-six stumbles into marriage with a silly, spoiled woman of twenty. At the end of their honeymoon which lasts a week or so, they return to Moscow--and the young woman simply runs away.[205] Another encounter of a much older man and a very young woman--she is nineteen, to be exact--is portrayed in Leonid Zhukhovitskii's novella which contains some interesting details on current sexual mores in the USSR.[206] The hero of the story was once married to a girl the same age; they parted when he discovered she had been unfaithful to him the very first time he was out of town. One reason for that was female promiscuity in the North where there is always a shortage of women. The heroine of the story was a casual pickup, yet turns out to be a virgin. She explains that her girlfriends all were deflowered when they tried to use sex to catch a husband. Her sex education amounted to a single sentence heard from her mother: "dogs bring fleas, guys bring kids." She refuses to have the man pay for her, insisting, "I am your mistress, not a kept woman."[207] Eventually, she says, she wants to marry her hometown boyfriend, but right now she is

content to have this romance which will be over in two weeks. She leaves without saying goodbye, and in a note tells her lover that she expects to be neither celibate nor promiscuous.[208]

If the moderate sexual emancipation of a young woman in the story above is presented sympathetically, there is no such authorial empathy in a novella about a young man of twenty-two and a young woman of nineteen who marry within a week of their accidental encounter in a restaurant.[209] Instead of a honeymoon, they go off on a newspaper assignment to do a story on deep sea fishing. The bride has an affair with one of the men there, and the marriage seems to be on the rocks--but no, they kiss and make up. And in a novel by Mikhail Roshchin a teenage boy falls in love with his schoolteacher. The adolescent crush becomes a real physical passion, but the ending is not a happy one: the boy jilts the teacher--for another older woman.[210] Two novellas lay the blame for the new sexual mores at the door of permissive parents. One is a sensitive description of a teenage girl intoxicated by the attention of grown men during a boat trip. The late Alexander Yashin shows the girl's mother not at all indignant about one of the passangers' attempt to rape her daughter. Fellow passengers are not embarrassed by the incident either.[211] The other is about parents who do not object to their daughter's sleeping in their apartment with a man not yet her husband.[212]

Downright depravity is reported by Vil' Lipatov, whose industrious production of pulp fiction has already been noted. A woman, twice impregnated by her former lover, with two abortions resulting, cannot conceive by her husband. She now begs her former lover to help her out--the husband, she is sure, would readily believe that the child was his. (There are some intimations that such goings-on are somehow related to corrupting Western influences. The incident is followed by observations that people are

studying English and reading such racy fare as Thornton Wilder and the UNESCO Courier.)[213] Nikolai Vereshchagin's must surely be one of the first Soviet portraits of a "swinging single." The rake picks up a woman who came to Moscow for a visit and has no place to stay. This is followed by a detailed description of his bachelor quarters that are expertly equipped for immoral activities. The reading preferences of the protagonist reflect his depravity: Mandelstam, Tsvetayeva and that "pornographic" classic, Nabokov's Lolita, unpublished in the USSR and therefore obtained illegally. In a postscript, we are allowed to witness the wages of sin. The swinger is now married to a very modern lady who works for television. Their two-year-old child was farmed out to grandma out of town. The former gay blade does all the housework, drinks, and feels old at the age of thirty-six.[214] Immoral life, we are given to understand by Vil' Lipatov, causes that modern illness, depression, which is manifested through such symptoms as chest pains and unjustified hostility toward people. A protagonist in the novel resists all the "mysticism and occult crap" that is routine in psychiatry, and is given a prescription for Tofranil, a drug used also by similarly afflicted Americans.[215]

In short, as we learn from Lev Yakimenko's satirical novel, life just isn't what it used to be, morality has gone out the window, permissiveness is destroying society's backgone, and everything around us is just disintegrating. According to Yakimenko's middle-aged narrator, nobody gives a damn about anything anymore, longhair hippies have taken over, and one cannot tell a man from a woman. But then what can one expect, he muses, when policewomen (yes, policewomen) are looking the other way--but they are always around to arrest an old-fashioned harmless drunk. The kids are hooked on immoral foreign music by the Beatles, transistor radios are all over the place, and people also listen to some suspicious taped music.

True, there are still some good, decent books--by Semen Babayevskii, for instance, but too much trash gets printed anyway. As for those modern women, the less said the better. They have grown completely shameless, and their boyfriends are even worse. They get married and divorced just like that, and these are the women whom society entrusts with the upbringing of children. Nobody works hard nowadays, the way people used to. Well, he tells himself, these are all the results of soft living. Such is the picture of a provincial town, as described by Yakimenko's narrator, a minor bureaucrat. Fortunately, the author treats him with very obvious irony and condescension.[216]

14. The Shaky Soviet Family

That Aleksandr Avedyenko's vintage Stalinist potboiler In the Sweat of Thy Brow was serialized in Novyi mir (only recently, it seems, a literary monthly of liberal leanings) is surely a sign of changing times.[217] A discussion of a recent divorce prompts one of Avdeyenko's protagonists to comment:

> How could he fall out of love with such a marvelous woman? The fool will never find a better wife than Tatyana. She is beautiful and intelligent, well educated, a top-notch professional, and a real Bolshevik.[218]

These are, to be sure, impressive credentials for a wife, yet apparently inadequate for Tatiyana's "foolish" husband. As Tolstoy noted in the opening sentence of a great novel, "happy families are all alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own peculiar manner." Soviet divorce rate is roughly as high as American, and broken families are strewn all over recent Soviet writing of all genres.[219] Even such pillars of literary Stalinism as Anatolii Sofronov, who prefers to concentrate on the positive and the optimistic, cannot escape their melancholy presence. Before the curtain falls on the play The Song of Life (leading the audience to assume

that all will live happily ever after), we meet most varieties of marital dysfunction, including adultery, promiscuity, divorce, frigidity and lack of communication.[219a] The list of problems seems endless, and can rival anything conjured up by American television, including even sexless marriages of convenience which, earlier Marxist writings insisted, are endemic to capitalism alone.[220] Ironically, the only "perfect" marriage seems to be that of the mythical Don Juan. In Vasilii Fedorov's generally inept and overly long narrative poem, the great womanizer, upon finding himself in the USSR, quickly adapts to Soviet conditions. He gets a job in a factory, marries, and becomes a happy father and virtuous family man.[221] One factor that appears to be blamed for the strains and frequent breakup of Soviet families is society's failure to adapt to the changed sex roles of men and women. This may be viewed with some surprise since, officially, the roles had been changed immediately in the wake of the Revolution—resulting then in similar strains and breakdowns as described, for instance, in Fedor Gladkov's 1925 novel Cement. That these pains are now being felt again is, apparently, a result of the de facto reinstatement of patriarchal values during the Stalin era. Hence, when viewed against the background of personal memories of protagonists in recent Soviet writing, the changes and disruptions are recent. As one personage puts it in Vasilii Belov's poignant story about a divorced father who regularly sneaks by the house to catch a glimpse of his little daughter: "Women are too lazy nowadays to bear children, and menfolk have forgotten how to feed a family."[222]

Irina Grekova is the author of the most moving single novel in our sample dealing with spouses, lovers, widows and children. The Mistress of a Hotel is valuable sociological evidence and skillfully wrought narrative, the more remarkable because its author, an older single woman and mother of grown children, is not a professional author. Best known for her 1963

novella Ladies' Hairdresser, Yelena Venttsel' (Grekova is her pen name) is a professor of mathematics.

The heroine of The Mistress of a Hotel is cast by whim of destiny into different roles. We meet her first as the submissive wife of a tyrannical army officer twice her age. She has no children of her own, but is the stepmother, briefly, of her husband's son by a previous marriage, and then is also left to bring up two children of an unmarried woman friend. After her husband's death, she acquires a lover--the second colonel in her life--but he is an alcoholic and she must break off the relationship. Her third involvement and first real love is with a married man who will never leave his invalid wife. Grekova's wise and sensitive novel is a wonderful biography of a single woman who, because of war, death and social dislocation, reverses the traditional sequence and is first a wife of an indifferent husband, then a single mother, and in late middle-age, the unmarried partner in an adulterous liaison.[223]

Unmarried mothers, for the most part war widows, were often featured in Soviet literature of the first postwar decade. They are frequently found in recent writing as well, either as divorcees, mothers of illegitimate children, or women deserted by their husbands. Several of the latter are mentioned, for example, in Yurii Skop's novel.[224] In Aleksandr Malyshev's story, a "second generation" single mother, i.e., a daughter of a single mother, additionally personifies the permanence of this condition by working in an orphanage. Though still young and attractive, she has grown accustomed over the years to being accosted by men who, she knew full well, had no serious intentions: no man could possibly wish to bring up somebody else's child.[225]

The problem of unwed motherhood receives an interesting twist in Leonid Frolov's tale. A war widow marries a younger man who then leaves

her for a much younger woman. She bears him no grudge, but hopes that her ex-husband and his new wife, a "modern" woman, may allow her to bring up their child. She aspires, in effect, to single motherhood.[226] In a well-written novella Pavel Nilin, known abroad primarily as the author of Comrade Venka (Zhestokost'), a fine novel about the Civil War, recounts the trials and tribulations of a working class single mother. Persecuted in her youth for "immorality," she successfully raises her illegitimate daughter to adulthood--only to be exploited by her and her "artistic" husband. Unlike most other unwed mothers in recent Soviet fiction, she once actually had an opportunity to marry, but decided against it because the daughter did not like the prospective stepfather. It is only after the daughter's marriage that the mother marries--for the first time in her life.[227]

Popular Soviet literature yields considerable sociological evidence on the status of women in the USSR. Women are expected to work full time, and also do the housework. According to recent Soviet sociological data, working women spend on house chores between one-half and a full additional shift.[228] Furthermore, women are usually found performing physically more arduous work. The following observation in Georgii Baklanov's novel is quite revealing: men are found behind the wheel operating the bulldozers and all other machinery, while women are shoveling asphalt manually.[229] Old sexual stereotypes not overly flattering to women abound. Thus, Dmitrii Yevdokimov's short novel takes it for granted that men must be chivalrous toward weaker (and somewhat weaker-minded) women.[230] Valentina Yermolova, a woman, repeats matter-of-factly scores of sexist cliches and jokes, although she does appear to resent the fact that women with full-time jobs must also do all of the housework and assume exclusive care of the children, while their husbands go out for a few drinks with the boys. It is suggested that women are forced to tolerate this state of affairs because there is a shortage of

eligible men, and a great many of these refuse to give up their freedom and assume family responsibilities.[231] One woman author who refuses to meekly accept sex discrimination is Valentina Chudakova who recalls with some resentment how, during World War II, she was not taken seriously as a combat officer solely because of her gender.[232]

A curious footnote is provided by two novels in which Russian women are shown consorting with non-Slavic men from Soviet Central Asia. In one novel, the narrator's brother and mother, both of them her dependents, are making racist slurs about her Kirgiz boyfriend, with the result that she marries a Slav--who turns out to be stupid and narrow-minded.[233] The other novel suggests that Russian girls should stay away from Kirgiz men. A Russian soldier, discharged from the army, finds out that his girl, also a Russian, has married another man, a practicing Moslem. The Kirgiz forces her to leave school, forbids her to leave the house unaccompanied, and compels her to read the Koran.[234] A number of other observations in the novel (some of them, it is true, by unsympathetic speakers) indicate that as a rule Central Asian men mistreat European women, that East is East, and West is West.[235]

15. Religion

Brief references to religious observance have always been found in Soviet literature; more often than not these served as an excuse for disparaging authorial comment about the church, the clergy and religion generally. Casual references of this sort continue to appear; a good example has an old mother of a Soviet official insist that when the time comes her grave be marked by an Orthodox cross.[236] Yurii Nagibin's impressive short novel about Vasilii Tredyakovskii, an eighteenth-century poet often considered one of the founders of Russian literature, contains a wealth of detailed descriptions of religious objects and ceremonies, which is only

appropriate in a fictional biography of a prist's son.[237] Some unfriendly comments on religious superstition are contained in a novel about patients afflicted with diseases for which no real cure exists as yet, e.g., cancer. In desperation, such patients turn to various "witch doctors."[238] A more pointedly anti-religious tone pervades one old-fashioned Stalinist account of a Soviet collective farm on the eve of World War II. Detailed (and approving) accounts are provided of crude anti-religious propaganda and the closing of churches.[239]

More unusual are the two generally positive portrayals of a priest. In both cases a hospital serves as a background. The first priest is a patient. An atheist doctor whose wife died in a recent motorcycle accident argues with him about religion; other doctors are simply rude to him, insulting the priest and mocking his faith. ... the end of the short novel, the priest dies and the physicians blame each other for his death.[240] In the second novel, a young priest explains that older people tend to attend church not only for social reasons (they no longer care for cinema, he says) but also because of spiritual needs. As people grow older, the priest observes, they begin to think of death and to take stock of their consciences, their souls.[241]

Far and away the most interesting fictional discussion of the subject of religion is found in Eclipse, a 1977 novel by Vladimir Tendryakov, one of the country's leading writers of prose.[242] What is significant about this particular work is that the brand of religion described in it is not a dying faith to which only the elderly cling for consolation. The cult in Tendryakov's novel is a revivalist sect which draws its adherents from among the educated sons and daughters of successful Soviet citizens. The parents are, understandably, heartbroken--but nothing will avail.[243] Various reasons attract new members to the sect. Some join because of the

charismatic personality of the preacher. Others are intrigued by the congregation's motto, "God is love and understanding." In the case of the novel's heroine, the decisive reason was the failure of other persons and institutions to satisfy her quest for answers about man's ultimate destiny and his hope for immortality.[244] Failure to deal with the problems of immortality, even in metaphoric sense, is cited by one of the characters in Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago as a fundamental weakness of Marxism. More significantly, it brings to mind the teachings of Nikolai Fedorov (1828-1903) whose teachings on the actual resurrection of the dead were at one time "widely popular during the Soviet period."[245]

16. The Senior Citizen

Because of its emphasis on a drastic break with the past, Soviet ideology has, from its beginnings, been heavily youth-oriented. There is also, of course, the purely utilitarian consideration. The economic and other contributions of the old and the aging are small. Furthermore, unlike in democratic societies, in the USSR the aged are not a political force. Soviet literature has over the decades faithfully mirrored such attitudes, most often by featuring few elderly protagonists.

Of late, however, there have been some noticeable shifts in the image of the senior citizen in Soviet letters. In part, this may be a consequence of the aging of the population as a whole--and also, perhaps, in the dramatic aging of the Soviet leadership itself. Today the USSR is, arguably, the world's leading gerontocracy.

In Europe generally, but especially in the USSR, World War II is the line dividing generations. In literary works, older men and women are depicted almost without fail as shaped, essentially, by their wartime experiences and are often still scarred by them, sometimes forever. Thus, in Anatolii Dimarov's novella we meet an old woman still mourning her four

sons and a daughter, all of them victims of the war. To her, they are still alive: she speaks of them in the present tense.[246] In Nikolai Yevdokimov's story, a woman of seventy-eight still refuses to accept the fact that her son died in the war over three decades ago, and continues to daydream about him. A teenage girl tells her the son is alive, though an invalid, but this turns out to be a lie; it appears the girl wanted to make the old lady happy.[247] Yurii Kazakov's story is unrelated to the war, but the tragedy of the parent who outlives his child is much the same. A father mourns a son who had committed suicide, reliving scenes of the son's childhood and boyhood.[248]

Two mothers, both with vivid memories of difficult pasts, now observe with some pain the disappointing lives of the young whose lives are, after all, free of war or deprivation. In Sergei Yesin's tale, an old woman schoolteacher whose father knew Chekhov personally, watches her son-in-law become an alcoholic, while her grandson ends up in jail for rowdyism. Upon release, he gets involved with some undesirables, becomes addicted to foreign-made blue jeans and nylon shirts, and gradually gravitates towards black marketeering. Fortunately, grandmother intercedes for him.[249] In Alexander Bologov's short novel we come accidentally upon an identical situation: an old woman watching her son-in-law turn into an alcoholic. She also observes the less than successful marriages of her children, and ultimately decides to move out and live on her own. She always did get the impression of being in the way.[250] In Yurii Krasavin's effective portrait of an old man, recently widowed, the protagonist also wishes to leave the son and his family where he feels out of place. Here, however, there is also a positive impetus: grandfather wants to return to his village in order to go back to work and feel useful to society.[251] There seems to be no way of pleasing the young. In Vladimir Karpov's "Three Day Passes," a childless woman

living in an old age home visits from time to time her late sister's ailing husband to help him out with housework; his grown children resent the intrusion.[252]

The central protagonists of two novellas are not yet old, but they are portrayed on the brink of death from medical causes and thus their responses to the situation are those normally associated with advanced age. In Viktor Perepelka's story a widowed middle-aged man undergoes dangerous surgery. His only relative, a spinster sister, comes to be with him. The two recall their common childhood and the war. The sister is shocked at nurses who discuss their boyfriends while death is stalking the hospital ward. The patient survives.[253] Sergei Yesin's is, to an extent, a Soviet amalgam of Bunin's The Gentleman from San Francisco and Tolstoy's Death of Ivan Ilyich. The man who has a heart attack is only forty, and the wife's chief worry is that his superiors will now view him as an invalid and will not promote him. His career, she fears, may be ruined. Though a leading foreign trade specialist, her husband was not assigned the coveted post in West Germany. The wife is concerned that they will not be able to keep up with the Ivanovs, that they won't get the foreign gadgets they have so long dreamt of. In the end, the husband dies.[254]

Valentin Rasputin's moving short novel The Final Stage depicts Anna, a peasant woman of eighty on her deathbed. A true descendant of peasants from the great Russian novels of the nineteenth century, she is serene in awaiting the inevitable. Her matter-of-fact calm contrasts with that of her children, each of whom now has a life different from the others.

Three have moved away from the village years ago; yet even the son who stayed behind is no longer firmly rooted in the countryside. None has the mother's inner strength that comes from closeness to one's physical and spiritual roots. They have all come to bid their mother farewell and be

present at her burial. As Geoffrey Hosking comments:

> Their arrival gives Anna unexpected strength, and she revives for a few more days, long enough for them to feel that there is no point in hanging about in the village waiting for what may still be months ahead. Then, as soon as they go, their mother dies. The author offers no further comment, but all the earlier material would lead us to expect that her children will never meet together again. A family has broken up, and a rural community has moved one step closer to final dissolution.[225]

Rasputin's novel, by far the most memorable canvas of old age and of death in recent Soviet writing, was published in paperback in 1,600,000 copies.[256]

17. America

The subject of America is, understandably, raised only marginally in popular Soviet literature of 1976-80, and references to the United States are few and far between. Nevertheless, these are worth considering because of the vast reading public reached by these works. Furthermore, the impact of such "informal," parenthetical mentions of the United States may be substantial precisely because of their "unofficial" character.

Anti-American sloganeering, a staple of domestic Soviet propaganda, is also routinely heard at official writers' gatherings. Thus, at the February 1980 meeting of the Union of Soviet Writers, Leonid Novichenko, a literary critic, appealed for greater civic-mindedness in the writing community. "This duty," Novichenko intoned, "is imposed on us by international conditions that have grown more complex as a result of American imperialism's aggressive militaristic designs.[257]

It seems that American malevolence toward Russia antedates even the establishment of the Soviet regime. At least so it appears from Valentin Pikul''s Wealth. (Pikul' is also the author of an anti-Semitic novel which has already been referred to in another context.) Pikul''s novel is set in 1904, at which time the Japanese were trying to annex the Russian peninsula of Kamchatka; nothing came of their nefarious plans because of

determined Russian resistance. According to Pikul', the Japanese were egged on by Americans, and it is the Americans who were the real villains in the abortive conspiracy.[258] The Americans are cast in their traditional villainous role in a novel about the Civil War which features also Lenin and Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the Soviet secret police. Dmitrii Yeremin's Before the Leap, which was published in 1980 in a paperback with a press run of two and a half million copies (one of the largest even for that mass circulation series), dwells on the hostile activities of American imperialism generally, and singles out in particular its principal agent Cyrus McCormick.[259] Even a documentary story set during World War II, when the USSR and the United States were allies, most Americans, and British, too, are depicted as reactionary foes of the Soviet Union who, incongruously, are for the time being fighting the Nazis.[260] In a 1978 story about a Soviet sailor, set in 1946, i.e., in the immediate aftermath of the war, the evil intentions of Americans are already obvious:

> Not far from the city the Pacific pounded the rocky shore. I served in the navy there, and I saw American battleships close to our shores. They did not shoot, but they intimidated with their presence. Miners were uneasy in the coal mines, and farmers in the fields. Before long, however, we had also acquired new ships and the Americans sailed away from Soviet shores as if by magic. The shameless respect force alone.[261]

Among their other misdeeds, recent Soviet writing holds Americans responsible for offering asylum to anti-Soviet emigres; several instances involving alleged Nazi collaborators were cited earlier in this study. A more innocent tale is realted in Nikolai Dubov's The Wheel of Fortune. The American tourist on a visit to the USSR is an emigre, a son of a Russian landowner dispossessed by the Revolution, and now an owner of an American drugstore. He is not, as might be expected, a spy or a saboteur, but is merely trying to retrieve some family heirlooms.[262] More sinister Ukrainian emigres are found in Viktor Konetskii's story about the crew of a Soviet

merchant marine vessel.[263] The Ukrainians now in Canada explain to Soviet sailors that every intelligent person must have a lwayer: this way one learns what one can get away with.[264] Readers are told that Soviet sailors, while in American ports, regularly visit American bargain basements and discount stores, avoiding only those run by Russian emigres. These Soviet sailors then smuggle into the USSR clothing and pornographic postcards.[265] The novel's major target is America's "extremely polluted environment," which is described in considerable detail. Near the Philadelphia waterfront Soviet sailors see car cemeteries filled with flattened auto bodies. It is there, the author informs, that bosses of the Cosa Nostra have their offices from which they run the Mafia's activities. Everything, including a lone crabapple tree, is covered with grime, and everything is shabby. Still, Konetskii's familiarity with American realia is apprently limited. This reader was amused by Konetskii's choice of a poorly built, tinny American car. It was a Mercedes-Benz.

Infatuation with things American leads to no good in Ivan Neruchev's novella The Bridge of Ford, Jr. A Soviet young woman, daughter of a prominent surgeon and admirer of everything American, at long last meets an impressive American, the son of Henry Ford himself. They become engaged, but shortly before the wedding day, Soviet police apprehend "Henry Ford," also wanted for impersonating a Rockefeller and a Churchill. The here (or, rather, anti-hero) of Neruchev's story, Henry Ford, Jr., attempted to mimic the behavior and attributes of the Soviet notion of what an American is and does. Hence, he pretends to be very rich, very amiable, ill-mannered, presumptuous, uneducated and naive.[266] Alla Drabkina's short story purports to describe a genuine American, not a Soviet imposter, but the two are quite alike. Drabkina's American has never heard of J. D. Salinger (in fact, he says, Americans are not big on books, unlike--he adds with some awe--Soviet

people, and are only interested in money). Indeed, the Russian-speaking American tourist guide is downright obsequious in praising everything Soviet and denigrating his compatriots. The reason he likes coming to the Soviet Union is that, in contrast to Americans, the Russians have "soul."[267]

Yurii Nagibin's travelling companion in Spain, an American writer, is no stereotype--he is intelligent and, on the whole, pleasant.[268] So are, for the most part, Vasilii Aksenov's Americans from his account of travels in the United States: a bit child-like, perhaps, and overly enamored of gadgets (automobiles especially), but decent on the whole.[269] We should bear in mind, however, that these purported to be factual accounts of real-life Americans, not fiction.

Incongruously, some of the most positive references to America and Americans appeared in the writings of Soviet authors who are far from being liberal. It is not inconceivable that coming as they did at the height of Soviet-American detente--they came out in 1976 and 1977--they were meant to reflect a new policy, a natural enough response of authors who are sensitive to all of the policy's fluctuations, however ephemeral, and are normally eager to reflect them in their work. Thus, in Nikolai Voronov's novel A Tadpole on Asphalt--the same one that warned against the perils of European-Asiatic intermarriage--a young protagonist rather likes Americans. In the first place, he admires them for moving away from overcrowded cities to suburbs in order to be close to nature. More unexpectedly, he approves of the Americans for buying up some of the world's best art, presumably because this implies a concern for beauty.[270]

Anatolii Sofronov is, to reiterate, a Soviet playwright of impeccable ideological orthodoxy. And it may well be that detente and the attendant activity in technology transfer (strictly one way, of course), inspired him to revive a Soviet dramatic genre that has fallen into disuse after flourish-

ing briefly in the early 1930's during the First Five Year Plan. The Giants, Sofronov's 1976 comedy, features most of the attributes of its predecessors. The setting is an industrial construction project (here, an automobile plant) somewhere in the USSR, with action unfolding in the present. The cast of characters includes shock workers, a wise Communist Party organizer, and an American engineer. The latter is shown as politically hopelessly naive (which explains his clinging to illusions about "bourgeois democracy" and, more importantly, his failure to wholeheartedly embrace the Soviet cause) but a competent specialist, honest, and personally likable. The American teaches the Russians some new production methods, and in exchange the Russians teach the American some essential facts relating to social and human values. These, as pointed out, are the obligatory features of the genre, and Sofronov's comedy has them all. Everything else is optional, varying from one play to another. In The Giants the American quickly forgets his fiancee back in the States and wants to marry a Russian girl. There is a happy ending. The Russian girl will marry a Russian, and the American will go back to his American fiancee. Sofronov's play was printed in a journal that had at that time a circulation of 327,000 copies and was also staged in a number of theaters.[271]

18. Conclusions

In an article published in 1975 in the country's most important journal of literary theory, a Soviet critic expressed his serious concern about the failure of Soviet literature to produce "a major socio-political novel." "Never before, perhaps, in the entire history of Soviet literature," the critic wrote, "was this failure felt as acutely."[272] Five years later, in the July 1980 issue of the same journal, another critic conceded, in effect, that little has been done to fill this gap. His reading of back issues of several Leningrad journals for the last few years revealed that the subject

matter of the bulk of recent prose was downright trivial. A typical plot, the critic reported, featured an adulterous affair involving a middle-aged man and a woman not much older than his son.[273] Nothing was said about the social and political novel, the absence of which was deplored in 1975. (The Soviet critic, incidentally, indirectly confirmed this writer's unflattering estimate of literary merit of popular Soviet fiction of the late 1970's. He, too, found in it much resemblance to the prerevolutionary tear-jerking dime novels of Charskaya and Verbitskaya.)[274] Indeed, these observations of both Soviet critics ultimately lead them to conclusious the present writer shares. Briefly stated, these are as follows. By past Soviet standards, popular Russian writing of 1975-80 is remarkably apolitical. Overtly propagandistic literature of the kind associated with the last years of Stalin's life, though still occasionally published, is no longer obligatory.[275] Nevertheless, there are some major positive values that are consistently championed by prose, drama and verse found in mass circulation Soviet literary periodicals. The first and most important by far is patriotism, glorification of those who defended their Soviet (and also pre-Soviet) Russian homeland from foreign invaders, and thus also, indirectly, the fostering of the idea of preparedness for such eventualities in the future. Obliquely--and sometimes overtly--the need for this kind of preparedness is hammered away with singular determination by hundreds upon hundreds of literary works, particularly those with World War II settings. The second is a kind of cult of labor broadly understood. It teaches readers, young and old, respect for industrial and scientific progress. It glorifies those whose courageous and pioneering work advances the frontiers of knowledge and civilization, the men and women of science, the lonely prospectors, pilots and fishermen in the inhospitable wilderness. This latter message, however, is vitiated in part by the impact of the third positive theme, that

of idealization of unspoiled Russian countryside and of the virtues of the traditional Russian village. The message of the so-called "village prose," though criticized on occasion, contains also, from the official vantage point, an important positive ingredient. It provides strong reinforcement to the patriotic message of the war novels. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that of the three "positive" themes only the last is very prominent in the more sophisticated Soviet writing of the same period which is otherwise mostly concerned with moral values and introspection.[276]

The larger part of popular Soviet writing of 1976-80 is concerned with very mundane matters. It examines in painstaking detail the strains in the traditional family structure, the epidemic of divorces, and the widespread phenomenon of unwed motherhood. In company with similar literary production of other strongly non-egalitarian societies--such as tsarist Russia, for instance, or Victorian England--Soviet pulp fiction affords the common reader a glimpse of the life of privileged classes that is beyond his reach and is therefore the object of prurient curiosity. It probes with considerable honesty the wide gamut of personal griefs, trials and tribulations. With considerable circumspection, it reports also on inadequate housing, shortages of consumers goods, alcoholism, and even, occasionally, crime. All of these are reported with sorrow and--in strong contrast to similar writing of the Stalin era--a measure of sympathy, compassion and sorrow.

Yet popular Soviet Russian writing of 1976-80 is also, in one important respect, very unlike the better literature that was produced in the USSR during the "thaws" of the Khrushchev era. In Soviet writing of 1976-80 personal griefs and even social ills are portrayed candidly enough. Their social--let alone political--roots are, as a rule, passed over in silence. The political moods of popular Soviet writing of 1976-80 are thus

consonant with the moderately repressive conservatism of the second Brezhnev decade.

This rather honest sympathy for human suffering and afflictions and simultaneous failure to link these to social institutions and policies result in some striking similarities between popular Soviet writing of the Brezhnev era and eighteenth-century Russian literature of Neo-Classicism and of Sentimentalism.. The writers of that period also glorified the nation's past military victories and extolled the beauties of the idealized village. Neo-Classicical plays and Sentimentalist prose portrayed orphaned children, unhappy lovers, impoverished old soldiers and mistreated servants. Yet it was tears these works were expected to bring forth, not indignation. They were intended as pleas for mercy, not demands of justice. And it was, perhaps, quite fitting that the author of the lachrymose Poor Liza, Russian Sentimentalism's most important writer, Nikolai Karamzin, was known also as a reactionary historian. Of Karamzin's History of the Russian State Pushkin wrote that "it demonstrates quite dispassionately the necessity for autocracy and the delights of the whip."

FOOTNOTES

[1]The one exception were college and university students of whom only 56 percent indicated this preference. The overall figure for a Soviet city with a population of 50,000 was 65. See Sovetskii chitatel'. Opyt konkretno-sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia. Sbornik statei (Moscow: Kniga, 1968), pp. 282, 78. The more recent findings are cited in Leonid Novichenko, "Sotsial'noe, nravstvennoe, khudozhestvennoe," Novyi mir, No. 6 (1976), p. 236.

[2]V. Litvinov in Voprosy literatury, 7 (1980), p. 44.

[3]The subject of publication and dissemination in America of Soviet writing is discussed in some detail in this writer's recent study, A Helsinki Record: The Availability of Soviet Russian Literature in the United States (New York: U. S. Helsinki Watch Committee, 1980).

[4]In a recent article Professor Gerschenkron reported that, among popular Soviet novels of the 1970's, Iosif Gerasimov's Pusk (The Start) contains a wealth of information about interindustrial relations, while Yurii Skop's Tekhnika bezopasnosti (Industrial Safety) reveals much about the workings of the central planning apparatus and the types of tensions and fears common in the Soviet economic bureaucracy. See Alexander Gerschenkron, Soviet Studies, No. 4 (1978), pp. 443-65. The book is Vera S. Dunham, In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976). As the title indicates, the study's scope is limited to the Stalin era; the data does not reach beyond 1953. There are, however, article-length discussions of individual aspects of the problem, though not many. In the past, these were often products of M. A. theses in Russian literature at Columbia University's Russian Institute directed, for the most part, by the late Ernest J. Simmons. Subsequently such investigations fell into disrepute as "vestiges of the Cold War" unworthy of serious literary scholars. This writer has attempted, insofar as this is possible within the space limitations of an essay, to produce

a brief "integrated" account of "high" and popular Russian writing. See Maurice Friedberg, "Russian Literature in the Twentieth Century," Literature and Western Civilization. David Daiches, General Editor (London: Aldus Books, 1976), Vol. VI, pp. 339-71.

[5]Sovetskii chitatel', op. cit., p. 104. The full list was as follows:

Periodical	Preferred by workers, percent	Preferred by engineers and technicians, percent
Yunost'	22	28
Neva	21	24
Znamya	16	18
Moskva	11	13
Oktyabr'	11	15
Molodaya gvardiya	9	7
Novyi mir	9	14
Zvezda	8	8
Inostrannaya literatura	4	11

The last journal is devoted entirely to non-Soviet writing which lies outside the scope of this study.

[6]Some Soviet books are published, indeed, for foreigners only and cannot be purchased within the USSR at all. Several have appeared under the auspices of Novosti, the "unofficial" Soviet press agency, such as the memoirs of Solzhenitsyn's former wife who lives in the USSR. While highly critical of Solzhenitsyn, the book contained lengthy quotations from his proscribed novels.

[7]L. I. Brezhnev, "Tselina," NM, 11 (1978), pp. 3-55.

[8]Anatolii Sofronov in MG, 2 (1977), pp. 27-33.

[9]Anatolii Sofronov in NS, 7 (1978), pp. 102-05.

[10]Vadim Kozhevnikov, "Belaya noch'," Z, 9 (1978), pp. 3-34.

[11]Vadim Kozhevnikov, "Pole zhizni," Z, 5 (1979), pp. 55-72.

[12]Ibid., p. 60.

[13]Ibid., p. 61.

[14]Ibid., p. 65.

[15]Vladimir Soloukhin, "Kameshki na ladoni," NS, 11 (1978), pp. 86-102.

[16]"But the sectarians of the Left [levaki]/Would not listen to Allende/They have not read Dostoyevsky's Possessed/And the home-grown terror of Leftist sectarians/

Mistaken for Socialism's true face/Frightened the philistines." Yevgenii Yevtushenko, "Golub' v Sant'yago," NM, 11 (1978), pp. 156-93.

[17]Fedor Abramov, "Dom," NM, 12 (1978), pp. 3-164.

[18]Ibid., p. 9.

[19]Ibid., p. 13.

[20]Ibid., p. 67.

[21]Ibid., p. 106.

[22]Ibid., pp. 158-59.

[23]Yegor Isayev, "Dal' pamyati," M, 1 (1976), pp. 10-38.

[24]Cited in Voprosy literatury, 3 (1980), p. 3.

[25]Tamara Motyleva in Voprosy literatury, 5 (1972), p. 58.

[26]Cited in N.N. Shneidman, "Soviet Prose in the 1970's: Education or Stagnation? Canadian Slavonic Papers, Vol. XX, No. 1 (March 1978), p. 64.

[27]The final demise of the positive hero was somewhat prematurely announced by the late Rufus W. Mathewson, Jr., in the introduction of the revised edition of The Positive Hero in Russian Literature (2nd edition, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975).

[28]Boris Polevoi, Anyuta, RG, 11 (1977).

[29]Semen Babaevskii, Stanitsa, RG, 10 (1976).

[30]Ye. Kaplinskaya, "Vremya na vsekh skorostyakh," Z, 1 (1976), pp. 4-51.

[31]Yevgenii Vorob'ev, "Okhota k peremene mest," Zv, 9 (1978), pp. 13-144; 10 (1978), pp. 9-123.

[32]Anatolii Anan'ev, "Gody bez voiny," NM, 4, 5 and 6 (1975); 9 (1979), pp. 3-63; 2 (1979), pp. 11-175.

[33]Mikhail Kolesnikov, "Altunin prinimayet reshenie," Z, 1 (1976), pp. 32-84; 2 (1976), pp. 37-88. The novel also appeared in paperback form in 1,600,000 copies as issue 15 of RG (1976). A preface to the paperback editor commended the novel as a worthy response to L. I. Brezhnev's appeal at the XXV Party Congress for novels which arouse in readers "concern for the success of steel workers or a textile factory director, an engineer or a Party functionary."

[34]Mikhail Kolesnikov, "Shkola ministrov," Z, 10 (1977), pp. 83-142; 11 (1977), pp. 60-111.

[35]Ibid., 10 (1977), p. 91.

[36]Ibid., p. 92.

[37]Ibid., p. 123.

[38]Ibid., p. 128.

[39]Vil' Lipatov, "Igor' Savvovich," Z, 7 (1977), p. 39. The paperback edition was published as RG, 4 (1980). Incidentally, Lipatov's unusual first name is an acronym for Vladimir Il'ich Lenin.

[40]For a thorough treatment of the subject of "village prose" see Geoffrey Hosking, Beyond Socialist Realism: Soviet Fiction Since Ivan Denisovich (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980). Ironically, Hosking's general optimism about the future of Soviet literature is based on his high regard for the work of authors who have since emigrated, such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn and, more recently, Vladimir Voinovich. Several years ago this writer supervised a doctoral dissertation of Fidelis Balogun, now teaching in his native Nigeria, which was similarly filled with high hopes for "the new Soviet prose" of which the representatives he singled out for praise, Viktor Nekrasov and Vasilii Aksenov, are now emigres as well.

[41]Yurii Ubogii, "Plylo beloye oblachko," NS, 3 (1979), pp. 64-105.

[42]Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya, Vol. I (1962), p. 386, describes Babaevskii's Cavalier of the Golden Star (1947-48) and its sequel Light Above the Land (1949-50) as "embellishing reality and playing down the difficulties of postwar reconstruction of collective farms." As Khrushchev reported in his "secret speech" of 1956, motion pictures inspired by such novels led Stalin to believe that all was well in the Soviet countryside. Babaevskii's 1978 novel was Semen Babaevskii, "Privol'ye," M, (1978), pp. 99-201; 10 (1978), pp. 117-58. The novel is to be continued.

[43]Vladimir Dobrovol'skii, "Za nedelyu do otpuska," Zv, 4 (1976), pp. 6-68; 5 (1976), pp. 3-91. Vladimir Dobrovol'skii, "Tekushchie dela," Zv, II (1978),

pp. 14-96; 12 (1978), pp. 3-128. Vyacheslav Usov in Zv, 1 (1976), pp. 3-95.

[44]Lenid Novichenko, "Sotsial' noye, nravstvennoye, khudozhestvennoye," NM, 6 (1976), p. 243.

[45]The collection entitled Velikie versty, RG, 5 (1976) contains B. Mashuk's "Trudnye kilometry," V. Shugayev's "Parom cherez Kirengu" and A. Pobozhyi's "Vtoroi put' k okeanu." Georgi Markov's "Zemlya Ivana Yegorycha" and "Zaveshchanie" were published together in a volume entitled "Povesti," RG, 9 (1976).

[46]Mikhail Agursky, in The New Russian Literature (Research Paper No. 40 of the Soviet and East European Research Centre of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, July 1980), argues that such "village prose" does, in fact, challenge Party policy.

[47]Thus, for instance, in 1976 one critic was alarmed by what he perceived as the tendency of a number of authors of "village verse" to "idealize the patriarchal past, ignore social contradictions in descriptions of the past, and portray the countryside in opposition to the city's machine civilization which allegedly distorts natural human relations." Yet the same critic conceded that the urban poets' preoccupation with nature may have "intensified their awareness of their native land and their sensitivity to beauty." See Al. Mikhailov, "Ritmy semidesyatykh," NM, 3 (1976), pp. 233, 239. Three years later another critic, writing in the same journal, claimed that "village prose" champions the cause of "preservation, as a permanent value of Socialist society, of everything that is valuable in village traditions, such as the peculiarly ethnic way of life, closeness to nature, working habits and moral norms." See Yu. Kuz'menko, "Mezhdu gorodom i selom," NM, 12 (1979), p. 231.

[48]Fedor Abramov, "Dom," RG, 6 (1980).

[49]Anatolii Krivonosov, "Peskarinaya ukha," M, 11 (1979), pp. 3-59.

[50]Viktor Levashov, "Pervaya polovina zhizni," Z, 6 (1977), pp. 8-122.

[51]Iosif Gerasimov, "Predel vozmozhnogo," NM, 11 (1979), pp. 5-81; 12 (1979), pp. 7-65.

[52]Vyacheslav Shugayev, "Povesti," RG, 18 (1977).

[53]Yevgenii Nosov, "Usvyatskie shlemonostsy," RG, 20 (1977).

[54]Fedor Abramov, "Rasskazy," NS, 1 (1976), pp. 126-41.

[55]Mikhail Golubkov, "Malye klyuchiki," NS, 12 (1978), pp. 21-53.

[56]Vladimir Soloukhin, "Rasskazy," NS, 9 (1976), pp. 26-44.

[57]Vladimir Soloukhin, "Tary-bary," M, 7 (1978), pp. 127-49. The only sour notes were a few complaints by the farmers regarding the inadequacy of old age pensions. That, however, the author hastened to add in a footnote, was before the recent increases in the amounts of money paid to retirees. Ibid., p. 129.

[58]Valentin Rasputin, "Proshchanie s Materoi," NS, 10 (1976), pp. 3-71; 11 (1976) pp. 17-64.

[59]Ye Starikova, "Zhit' i pomnit'," NM, 11 (1977), p. 245.

[60]L. Novichenko in Voprosy literatury, 7 (1980), p. 10.

[61]Yurii Galkin, "V svetlykh, lunnykh bereznyakakh," NS, 3 (1977), pp. 74-117; Yurii Gradarev, "Stranitsy iz zapisnoi knizhki," NM, 1 (1976), pp. 131-42.

[62]Yurii Nagibin, "Chuzhaya," NM, 6 (1976), pp. 13-37.

[63]Yurii Nagibin, "Berendeyev les," NS, 6 (1977), pp. 101-36.

[64]Such concern is not entirely new. It was the subject, for instance, of Leonid Leonov's 1954 novel The Russian Forest.

[65]Vladimir Korenev, "Doroga v sosnovyi bor," MG, 3 (1977), pp. 25-96.

[66]Viktor Astaf'yev, "Tsar'-ryba," RG, 5 (1977).

[67]Aleksandr Chereshnev, "Leshii," NS, 7 (1978), pp. 134-57.

[68]Vladimir Chivilikhin, "Shvedskie ostanovki," RG, 23 (1977).

[69]Vladimir Komissarov, "Starye dolgi," NM, 11 (1976), pp. 71-144; 12 (1976), pp. 130-210.

[70]Ibid., 11 (1976), pp. 80-81.

[71]B. Zolotarev, "Vmesto zaveshchaniya," M, 12 (1978), pp. 106-40.

[72]R. Kireyev, "Pobeditel'," NM, 6 (1979), pp. 5-34; 7 (1979), pp. 56-146.

[73]Gennadii Nikolayev, "Kvartira," Zv, 3 (1978), pp. 3-118.

[74]Anatolii Gladilin, "Zaporozhets na mokrom shosse," Grani, 103 (1977), pp. 123-54.

[75]Vasilii Aksenov, "Poiski zhanra," NM, 1 (1978), pp. 105-92.

[76]Valerii Musakhanov, "Skorost'," Zv, 10 (1977), pp. 100-16; 11 (1977), pp. 74-131; 12 (1977), pp. 86-154.

[77]Anatolii Tkachenko, "Chetvertaya skorost'," NS, 5 (1978), pp. 32-114; 6 (1978), pp. 24-74. According to Tkachenko, not all Soviet owners of garages have cars. Some use them to store vegetables for the winter.

[78]Mikhail Godenko, "Polosa otchuzhdeniya," NS, 9 (1978), pp. 6-58, 10 (1978), pp. 116-50.

[79]Yulii Krelin, "Na chto zh. yetes', doktor," NM, 1 (1979), pp. 137-209; 2 (1979), pp. 181-205.

[80]Mariya Prilezhayeva, "Osen'," NM, 1 (1977), pp. 11-76. The subject of reader demand for foreign books in the USSR is treated in considerable detail in my book A Decade of Euphoria: Western Literature in Post-Stalin Russia (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977). In an unusual experiment, two of the books mentioned in Prilezhayeva's novel, The Woman in White and Queen Margot, were offered to the Soviet public not for money, but in exchange for forty-four pounds of scrap paper per book. See Friedberg, op. cit., pp. 76-77, and Pravda, October 24, 1974.

[81]Vil' Lipatov, "Povest' bez nazvaniya, syuzheta i kontsa," NM, 4 (1978), pp. 4-55; 5 (1978), pp. 118-85; 6 (1978), pp. 153-92.

[82]Ibid., 4 (1978), p. 31. Lipatov clearly intends to have readers view this ostensibly legal expression of interest in English-speaking countries by a Soviet teacher of English as somehow suspicious. The schoolteacher is fond of sprinkling her lexicon with English [illegible] and even obscenities, clearly a reprehensible trait in a Soviet schoolmarm.

[83]Ibid., 5 (1978), p. 139.

[84]Aleksandr Kron, "Bessonnitsa," NM, 4 (1977), pp. 7-80; 5 (1977), pp. 21-105; 6 (1977), pp. 8-127.

[85]Ibid., 5 (1977), p. 69.

[86]Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[87]Ibid., p. 70.

[88]Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[89]Should Soviet views and attitudes undergo a change between the date of the work's original appearance and that of its reissue, the standard procedure is rewriting it to conform with the new policies. Works that cannot be salvaged in this manner are simply not republished. Procedures described by the present author a quarter of a century ago have undergone little change. See Maurice Friedberg, "Soviet Literature and Retroactive Truth," Problems of Communism, Vol. III, No. 1 (January-February 1954), pp. 31-39. Also, "Soviet Writers and the Red Pencil," Midway (Chicago), Vol. XXVII, No. 3 (Winter 1968), pp. 39-57.

[90]Dmitrii Ushakov in MG, 1 (1977), pp. 229-30.

[91]Mark Kharitonov, "Den' v fevrale," NM, 4 (1976), pp. 108-45; Daniil Granin, "Obratnyi bilet," NM, 8 (1976), pp. 3-48; Yurii Nagibin, "Pered tvoim prestolom," Z, 3 (1977), pp. 68-103.

[92]B. Vasil'yev, "Byli i nebyli," NM, 8 (1977), pp. 4-117

[93]Nikolai Zadornov, "Kheda," NM, 4 (1979), pp. 79-111; 5 (1979), pp. 133-57; 6 (1979), pp. 73-181.

[94]Konstantin Skvortsov, "Otechestvo my ne menyayem," NS, 1 (1979), pp. 25-54.

[95]Vasilii Smirnov, "Otkrytie mira," Z, 10 (1977), pp. 32-78. These are the concluding chapters of a novel first serialized in October through December 1973 issues of the same journal.

[96]Ivan Danilov, "Krasnye stavni," M, 12 (1977), pp. 3-112.

[97]Boris Yevgen'yev, "Moskovskaya mozaika," M, 1 (1976), pp. 39-158. The narrative's form—an awkward attempt at a "stream of consciousness" technique—vitiates its purpose of providing a fictionalized history of the city of Moscow.

[98]Specifically, the novel portrays a kindly Russian capitalist who treats his workers well; it also contains sympathetic accounts of the Russian factory owner's business and family ties with Great Britain, as well as descriptions of life and customs of Russia's financial aristocracy early in the twentieth century. This author can recall no similarly positive descriptions of prerevolutionary bourgeoisie in Soviet fiction. See Yevgenii Permyak, "Ocharovanie temnoty," M, 4 (1976), pp. 3-63; 5 (1976), pp. 5-147. By contrast, in another novel, the St. Petersburg aristocracy and the military on the eve of World War I are shown in an unsympathetic light: they favor the monarchies of Germany and Austria over the French Republic, and are thus also the enemies of other Slavs struggling for their independence. See Yegor Ivanov, "Negromkii vystrel," MG, 12 (1977), pp. 16-160; 1 (1978), pp. 193-229.

[99]Valentin Katayev, "Kladbische v Skulyanakh," RG, 8 (1977).

[100]Valentin Pikul', "U poslednei cherty," NS, 4 (1979), pp. 19-152; 5 (1979), pp. 62-145; 6 (1979), pp. 79-120; 7 (1979), pp. 34-127.

[101]Ibid., 7 (1979), pp. 126-27.

[102]Pravda, October 8, 1979, and Literaturnaya Rossiya, No. 41, 1979.

[103]See Maurice Friedberg, "Jewish Themes in Soviet Russian Literature," The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917, ed. by Lionel Kochan (3rd rev. ed., New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1978), and Maurice Friedberg, The Jew in Post-Stalin Soviet Literature (Washington: B'nai B'rith, 1970).

[104]Anatolii Rybakov, "Tyazhelyi pesok," Oktyabr', 7 (1978), pp. 3-69; 8 (1978), pp. 34-106; 9 (1978), pp. 97-148.

[105]Aleksandr Borshchagovskii, "Damskii portnoi," Teatr, 10 (1980), pp. 142-67.

[106]Mikhail Bubennov, "Glavnyi put' vesny," MG, 1 (1977), pp. 11-160 and 193-221; 2 (1977), pp. 34-160 and 193-234.

[107]Sergei Zalygin, Komissiya, RG, 19 and 20 (1976).

[108]Vsevolod Kochetov, "Molnii b'yut po vershinam," M, 9 (1979), pp. 3-152.

[109]Venyamin Kaverin, "Vechernii den'," Zv, 3 (1979), pp. 60-119; 4 (1979), pp. 7-66; 5 (1979), pp. 84-130. Valentin Katayev, "Almaznyi moi venets," NM, 6 (1978), pp. 3-146.

[110]A fictionalized biography of Sergei Kirov, the Leningrad Party boss, first published in 1974, was reprinted in 1,600,000 copies with a laudatory preface by another stalwart producer of politically uplifting fare: German Nagayev, "Radi schast'ya," RG, 12 (1976). Frunze's life inspired Andrei Aldan-Semenov, "Groza nad Rossiei," M, 10 (1977), pp. 14-89; 11 (1977), pp. 152-68.

[111]Vladimir Kornilov, "Semigor'ye," RG, 16 (1977) was published with a glowing introduction by Georgii Markov, himself an author with impeccable political credentials; it was printed in 1,600,000 copies. A Ukrainian village on the eve, during, and immediately following World War II was portrayed in Mikhail Gorbunov, "Dolgaya niva," M, 8 (1977), pp. 24-170. More unusual was Ingrida Sokolova's novel which contrasted independent "bourgeois" Latvia with Soviet Latvia on the eve of the war, and then under Nazi occupation. Ingrida Sokolova, "Tri stupeni zhizni," Zv, 2 (1978), pp. 3-114.

[112]Aleksandr Chakovskii, "Pobeda," Z, 10 (1978), pp. 3-108; 11 (1978), pp. 3-69; 12 (1978), pp. 7-51.

[113]To cite a random few: Vasilii Tsekhanovich, "Tropa cherez pozharishche," Zv, 6 (1977), pp. 8-69; Ivan Ptashnikov, "Dvor otkrytyi miru," Z, 11 (1976), pp. 12-61, 12 (1976), pp. 75-114; Oleg Smirnov, "Poisk," Z, 2 (1979), pp. 6-77; Vyacheslav Kondrat'yev, "Tri rasskaza," Z, 10 (1979), pp. 84-159. Yakov Tsvetov, "Sinie berega," M, 2 (1976), pp. 14-57, 3 (1976), pp. 9-158, 4 (1976),

pp. 68-156; Il'ya Vergasov, "Ostanetsya s toboi navsegda," NM, 11 (1976), pp. 8-63, 12 (1976), pp. 13-124; S. Slavich, "Lukyanych," NM, 9 (1976), pp. 96-121. Two appeared as separate paperbacks: Petr Sazhin, "Sevastopol'skaya khronika," RG, 3 and 4 (1977), 1,600,000 copies each; Grigorii Baklanov, "Naveki—devyatnadtsatiletnie," RG, 10 (1980), 2,500,000 copies.

114 Among these were Georgii Markov, "Moya voyennaya pora," Z, 1 (1979), pp. 49-85; Vadim Kozhevnikov, "Tak bylo," M, 8 (1979), pp. 3-63; Konstantin Simonov, "My ne uvidimsya s toboi," Z, 2 (1978), pp. 3-73, 3 (1978), pp. 3-81; Daniil Granin, "Klavdiya Vilor," Zv, 6 (1976), pp. 85-130. The most gifted Soviet author now writing about the war is the Belorussian Vasil' Bykov; occasionally he writes in Russian as well. Bykov's Yego batal'on originally appeared in NS, 1 (1976), pp. 12-120. It was published as a paperback, RG, 22 (1976) in 1,600,000 copies.

115 Thus, V. Markov's long review of Brezhnev's trilogy (it consists of Malaya zemlya, Vozrozhdenie and Tselina—"The Small Land," "Rebirth" and "Virgin Soil") compared the first volume of the series, which describes the war, to Tolstoy's The Tales of Sebastopol. See V. Markov, "Postup' istorii," Z, 1 (1979), pp. 3-17. The other two volumes deal with the postwar period. Markov's enthusiasm was not shared by Yefim Etkind, a Soviet literary scholar specializing in esthetics who now teaches in Paris at the Sorbonne. In Etkind's estimate, Brezhnev's memoirs resemble the bulk of recent Soviet literature: "Grey style of this kind means that its authors are no longer distinguishable and can be confused with one another. Such is one of the profound laws of Soviet literature; those who do not accept it become instantly suspicious." See Survey (London), No. 4 (1977-78), pp. 97-108. Brezhnev's memoirs inspired one Soviet author to interview German eyewitnesses and participants in the battle of Novorossiisk described in the Soviet leader's Malaya zemlya and also to collect appropriate German documents. See Lev Bezymenskii, "Proval operatsii 'Neptun'," Z, 5 (1979), pp. 3-50.

[116]Ales' Adamovich and Daniil Granin, "Glavy iz blokadnoi knigi," NM, 12 (1977), pp. 25-158. Granin, of course, is a reputable novelist, and thus the collaboration was obviously an attempt to have a professional help an inexperienced writer with a story to tell, a procedure less common in the USSR than in this country.

[117]Yurii Ubogii, "Provodnitsa sed'mogo vagona," NS, 4 (1978), pp. 52-82.

[118]Such were, for instance, Yurii Solov'ev's "Uzelki na pamyat'," Zv, 2 (1977), pp. 3-104, and Yevgenii Nosov, "Usvyatskie shlemonostsy," NS, 4 (1977), pp. 15-86; 5 (1977), pp. 19-65.

[119]Thus, Anatolii Ivanov's very long novel The Eternal Call was first serialized in Moskva in issues 4, 5, 6 and 7 of 1970. Publication was resumed after an interruption of six years, and the concluding parts appeared in M, 7 (1976), pp. 3-116; 8 (1976), pp. 3-101; 9 (1976), pp. 3-121; and 10 (1976), pp. 3-137. In the chapters that appeared in 1976, Ivanov shows picturesque "folkloristic" Soviet villagers enthusiastically contributing to the war effort. Then there is a flashback to the Civil War, and the story of anti-Soviet guerrillas led by an Orthodox priest. We are then returned to the World War II setting, and are shown some Soviet prisoners of war in the Nazi concentration camp of Buchenwald. The novel also depicts the return of soldiers from the army and just punishment being meted out to Nazi collaborators (Ukrainian nationalists in particular). It concludes with a broad panorama of postwar reconstruction of industry as well as agriculture, first and foremost by the local members of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League.

[120]Thus, the story of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a young resistance fighter martyred by the Nazis, is related in Vladimir Uspenskii, "Mozhaiskoye napravlenie," MG, 11 (1977), pp. 44-155. Two former Soviet military intelligence officers published their memoirs, M. Andronov, "Odin," M, 9 (1977), pp. 137-50, and Vladimir Karpov, "Vzyat' zhivym!" RG, 7 (1977). The latter work by a Hero of

the Soviet Union (the latter title corresponds roughly to the American Congressional Medal of Honor) was printed in 1,600,000 copies.

[121]Irina Guro, "Arbatskaya izluchina," M, 7 (1979), pp. 3-133. It shall be recalled that during the Soviet campaign of vilification against Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the anti-Soviet novelist was repeatedly accused of whitewashing in his works traitors from the Vlasov army.

[122]Rita Rait-Kovaleva, "Chelovek iz 'Muzeya cheloveka'," Zv, 6 (1976), pp. 5-79. Boris Vil'de was anthropologist at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. There is a twist of irony in the coincidence that one of the newest anti-Soviet periodicals, Andrei Sinyavsky's Sintaksis, is published in a Parisian suburb on a street named after Boris Vil'de.

[123]Georgii Kholopov, "Dolgii put' vozvrashcheniya," Zv, 7 (1976), pp. 71-117; Petr Proskurin, "Imya tvoe," M, 2 (1977), pp. 3-109; 3 (1977), pp. 3-150; 4 (1977), pp. 15-148; 5 (1977), pp. 7-133.

[124]Aleksandr Chakovskii, "Blokada," RG, 1 (1976), 2 (1976) and 3 (1976) at 1,600,000 copies each; Petr Proskurin, op. cit., features loving scenes of Stalin issuing personal directives to executives of war industries. Aleksandr Rekemchuk's "Nezhnyi vozrast" [Tender Age] mentions Stalin favorably, particularly in connection with the battle for Stalingrad, and contains also references to Russian Nazi collaborators. The novel's unique feature is one of its central protagonists. An anti-Nazi emigre, his efforts to enlist in the Soviet army are repeatedly rebuffed because he is German. Rekemchuk's novel was published in NM, 4 (1979), pp. 5-75; 5 (1979), pp. 12-128.

[125]Yurii Avdeyenko, "Lyubov' uchitelya istorii," Z, 12 (1976), pp. 24-70; Yurii Pilyar, "Zabyt' proshloye," NM, 2 (1978), pp. 46-147.

[126]Yurii Geiko, "Zapakhi detstva," NM, 6 (1978), pp. 198-209.

[127]Vyacheslav Marchenko, "God bez vesny," NS, 3 (1976), pp. 4-139; the same author's "Lenty-bantiki," NS, 7 (1977), pp. 18-107.

[128]Aleksandr Kuleshov, "Belyi yater," Z, 4 (1977), pp. 62-140, 5 (1977), pp. 91-136. The novel portrays also romance on the base, and even breaches of discipline: a soldier has been stealing dynamite which was used by local teenagers in illegal fishing.

[129]These were, respectively, Viktor Stepanov, "Serp zemli," NM, 7 (1978), pp. 55-94; Yurii Pakhomov, "K oruzhiyu, eskulapy," Zv, 7 (1978), pp. 5-77; and Nikolai Gorbachev, "Bitva," Zv, 11 (1976), pp. 6-117, 12 (1976), pp. 5-125. An interesting incident may be found in Petr Proskurin's Imya tvoe (Moscow, Sovetskii pisatel', 1978, p. 701). An old peasant questions the need for space flights. In his opinion, they are too costly. Besides, "There is more work here on earth than one can cope with—and they are climbing up there."

[130]The novel was V. Leskov, "S vysoty poleta," Z, 1 (1977), pp. 87-133; the novella, Yurii Nikitin, "Goluboi karantin," NM, 5 (1978), pp. 46-78.

[131]Viktor Astaf'ev, "Tsar'-ryba," RG, 5 (1977).

[132]Yuvan Shestalov, "Taina Sorni-Nai," Zv, 2 (1976), pp. 141-202; idem., "Krasnaya legenda na belom snegu," Zv, 8 (1979), pp. 3-56.

[133]Yurii Sbitnev, "Proshchanie s zemlei," M, 9 (1976), pp. 135-73; Nikolai Shundik, "Belyi shaman," NS, 10 (1977), pp. 10-111; 11 (1977), pp. 16-103; 12 (1977), pp. 7-118.

[134]That was Sem'desyat dva gradusa nizhe nulya (72 Centigrade Below Zero), RG, 13 (1976). The work had already appeared twice in book form, in a "Sovetskii pisatel'" edition in 1975 and under the imprint of "Khudozhestvennaya literatura" in 1976. The three parts of Vladimir Sanin's trilogy Zov polyarnykh vysot had all originally appeared in Znamya: "V lovushke" (In The Trap), in Z, 9 (1976); "Trudno otpuskayet Antarktika" (The Arctic Does Not Let Off Easily) in Z, 5 (1977), pp. 8-86; and the concluding part, "Za tekh, kto v dreife" (To Those Adrift), Z, 4 (1978), pp. 5-104. A year later Znamya published Sanin's new novel about a group of Soviet fishermen who died in a storm in the Bering Sea.

[135]Fazil Iskander, "Morskoi skorpion," NS, 7 (1976), pp. 3-56, 8 (1976), pp. 71-131; "Derevo detstva," NS, 1 (1977), pp. 27-55; "Zaira," NS, 8 (1977), pp. 20-46.

[136]Boris Ryakhovskii, "Otrochestvo arkhitektora Naidenova," NM, 7 (1978), pp. 95-142; Aleksandr Rusov, "Liniya v proscranstve," Z, 6 (1976), pp. 19-74, 7 (1976), pp. 41-92; Aleksandr Polyakov, "More v noyabre," NM, 12 (1977), pp. 163-97.

[137]Valentin Makhonin, "Obshchezhitie," M, 6 (1976), pp. 3-76; Anatolii Ferenchuk, "Stoikii tuman," NM, 2 (1976), pp. 15-133, 3 (1976), pp. 70-153.

[138]Yakov Khelemskii, "Ne doyezzhaya Grenady," Z, 2 (1976), pp. 93-160, 3 (1976), pp. 80-150, 4 (176), pp. 92-155; Viktor Konetskii, "Putevye portrety s morskim peizazhem," Zv, 3 (1976), pp. 8-61; Idem., "Vcherashnie zaboty," Zv, 5 (1979), pp. 3-79, 6 (1979), pp. 29-129, 7 (1979), pp. 37-74.

[139]Vl. Gusev, "Skazki i byli zelenogo morya," Z, 10 (1976), pp. 63-111; Boris Sergunenkov, "Osen' i vesna," Zv, 6 (1978), pp. 57-129; Vasilii Peskov, "Dorogi i tropy," RG, 11 (1976), printed in 1,600,000 copies.

[140]Anatolii Tkachenko, "Ozero begloi vody," RG, 1 (1977). Printed in 1,600,000 copies.

[141]Yurii Kazakov, "Dolgie kriki," RG, 12 (1977); Chingiz Aitmatov, "Povesti," RG, 17 (1977).

[142]It appeared in a volume entitled "Vstrecha," RG, 21 (1976), printed in 1,600,000 copies, which contained also another charming tale of Rasputin, "French Lessons," as well as stories by three other young Siberian authors.

[143]Vera S. Dunham, In Stalin's Time, pp. 25-26.

[144]Anatolii Anan'ev, "Gody bez voiny," NM, 1 (1979), pp. 3-63, 2 (1979), pp. 11-175.

[145]In a Russian reader's mind, this is likely to evoke associations with Gogol's Inspector General, in which one of the provincial bureaucrats declares that accepting gifts of borzoi puppies should not be viewed as taking bribes.

[146]Georgii Semenov, "Bez shuma i pyli," NS, 9 (1978), pp. 59-76.

[147]Iosif Gerasimov, "Pusk," NM, 6 (1976), pp. 118-99.

[148]Petr Proskurin, "Imya tvoe," M, 2 (1977), pp. 3-109; 3 (1977), pp. 3-150; 4 (1977), pp. 15-148; 5 (1977), pp. 7-133.

[149]Sergei Snegov, "Tvortsy," Z, 3 (1976), pp. 15-73, 4 (1976), pp. 54-88, 5 (1976), pp. 7-103.

[150]Iosif Gerasimov, "Effekt polozheniya," Z, 11 (1979), pp. 3-87, 12 (1979), pp. 3-37. The novel features a number of protagonists found also in the same author's other novel that appeared simultaneously in another journal, "Predel vozmozhnogo," NM, 11 (1979), pp. 5-81, 12 (1979), pp. 7-65.

[151]Venyamin Kaverin, "Dvukhchasovaya progulka," NM, 11 (1978), pp. 63-155.

[152]Vyacheslav Usov, "Rezhim tayan'ya," Zv, 1 (1978), pp. 3-129.

[153]Aleksandr Kron, "Bessonnitsa," NM, 4 (1977), pp. 7-80, 5 (1977), pp. 21-105, 6 (1977), pp. 8-127.

[154]Valentin Tublin, "Pokidaya Edem," Zv, 10 (1976), pp. 6-103.

[155]Nikolai Sizov, "Konflikt v Priozerske," M, 10 (1978), pp. 8-11.

[156]Galina Bashkirova, "Rai v shalashe, ili Tat'yanin den'," Zv, 1 (1979), pp. 12-105, 2 (1979), pp. 57-99.

[157]Mikhail Korshunov, "Avtograf," M, 4 (1978), pp. 62-98, 5 (1978), pp. 59-158; Galina Shergova, "Zakolochennye dachi," NM, 3 (1978), pp. 68-96.

[158]Sergei Krutilin, "Masterskaya v glukhom pereulke," NS, 3 (1978), pp. 3-90.

[159]M. Ganina, "Uslysh' svoi chas," NM, 3 (1976), pp. 11-66. A glimpse of the Soviet Hollywood is also afforded by a novella describing an elderly film maker who, on the spur of the moment, flies to the other end of the country to an illegitimate daughter. Wherever the man goes, he is treated with great deference, as befits a celebrity. Lazar' Karelin, "Seismicheskii poyas," NM, 7 (1979), pp. 10-52.

[160]Lazar' Karelin, "RassKazy," NM, 5 (1976), pp. 92-129.

[161]Boris Shustrov, "Zapolyarnaya skazka," M, 10 (1976), pp. 140-71.

[162]Yurii Trifonov, "Dom na naberezhnoi," DN, 1 (1976), pp. 83-168.

[163]Oleg Mikhailov, "Osobnyak s fonarikami," NS, 9 (1978), pp. 79-94. Note the similarity in titles—"The Villa with Lanterns." Mikhailov's novel also features a female representative of Stalinist gilded youth; she becomes a theater-ticket scalper.

[164]Viktor Astaf'ev, "Poslednii poklon," NS, 1 (1978), pp. 52-53.

[165]L. Yershov, "Sotsial'noye i nravstvennoye. Po stranitsam prozy 70-kh godov," Zv, 10 (1976), pp. 209-17. Yershov notes also what is borne out by our observations, namely that in the late 1950's the leading Soviet Russian prose genre was the short story and the novella. By the 1960's these were displaced by the short novel, which was, in turn, supplanted in the 1970's by the full-length novel.

[166]Yu. Smelkov, "Obnovlenie konflikta," NM, 4 (1976), pp. 235-51.

[167]Anatolii Sofronov, "Zemnoye prityazhenie," M, 2 (1978), pp. 15-39. The quotation appears on p. 38. In the play, one of Sofronov's characters recalls with some nostalgia a wartime song—by Sofronov.

[168]Deming Brown, Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 279.

[169]Yurii Bondarev, "Mgnoveniya," NM, 8 (1977), pp. 157-70.

[170]Deming Brown, op. cit., p. 167.

[171]Ibid., p. 169.

[172]Yurii Trifonov, "Starik," DN, 3 (1978).

[173]Wolfgang Kasack, Lexikon der russischen Literatur ab 1917 (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1976), pp. 194-95.

[174]Aleksandr Kron, "Bessonnitsa," NM, 6 (1977), p. 62.

[175]Deming Brown, op. cit., p. 115.

[176]Yevgenii Yevtushenko, "Zaiskivanie," Yunost', 6 (1978).

[177]Deming Brown, op. cit., pp. 154-55.

[178]Yurii Nagibin, "Odin na odin," RG, 5 (1980).

[179]Mariya Prilezhayeva, "Osen'," NM, 1 (1977), pp. 11-76.

[180]Boris Vasilevskii, "Uchitel'nitsa," NM, 4 (1976), pp. 146-63.

[181]Petr Krasnov, "Shatokhi," NS, 2 (1977), pp. 70-87.

[182]Nikolai Starshinov, "Drevnii syuzhet," NS, 1 (1976), p. 124. The author was born in 1924 and is a reasonably well-known poet.

[183]Vladimir Karpov, "Bagayev," NS, 8 (1978), pp. 60-68.

[184]Aleksandr Astrakhantsev, "Dom k sdache," NS, 1 (1979), pp. 55-74.

[185]Georgii Semenov, "Vol'naya nataska," NM, 9 (1976), pp. 3-92, 10 (1976), pp. 80-164.

[186]Vladimir Tendryakov, "Rasplata," NM, 3 (1979), pp. 6-99.

[187]Russian readers were probably amused by one of them, who introduces himself to the police as follows: "Solomon Borisovich, alas, Rabinovich. Yes, a Jew. Yes, since my birth in 1925" (ibid., p. 50). Rabinovich is a "classical" Jewish name in Russian jokes, and the stereotype Jew in Russia does not drink. There is a quip in the USSR that while the Communists have, so far, failed to produce a New Soviet Man, they did, at least, succeed in creating Jewish Alcoholics. It is worth noting that Tendryakov's character openly complains of being mistreated because of his Jewishness.

[188]Semen Babayevskii, "Privol'ye," M, 10 (1979), pp. 3-108, 11 (1979), pp. 62-149.

[189]Ibid., pp. 74-76.

[190]Zoya Boguslavskaya, "Zashchita," NM, 10 (1978), pp. 15-114.

[191]Yurii Sbitnev, "Zhiteiskaya istoriya," Z, 9 (1979), pp. 74-111. The protagonist had actually married a woman pregnant with another man's child.

[192]Anatolii Afanas'yev, "Melodiya na dva golosa," Z, 6 (1976), pp. 78-117.

[193]For instance, in Vasilii Lebedev, "Stolknovenie," Zv, 7 (1977), pp. 3-87, which is set on a state farm.

[194]Vil' Lipatov, "I eto vse o nem," RG, 7 (1976) and 8 (1976).

[195]Nikolai Voronov, "Lyagushonok na asfal'te," M, 12 (1976), pp. 23-82, 1 (1977), pp. 97-143. The quotation appears in 1 (1977), p. 110, with the word "businessman" in English to underscore, presumably, how alien the speaker is to the Soviet milieu.

[196]Ivan Yevseyenko, "Za tridevyat' zemel'," NS, 2 (1977), pp. 18-42.

[197]Viktor Popov, "Krai zemli," NS, 12 (1976), pp. 117-34.

[198]Valentin Rasputin, "Den'gi dlya Marii," RG, 23 (1976).

[199]A. Pristavkin, "Yescho odin den' s Alekseyem Boldyrevym," NM, 1 (1976), pp. 161-98; Aleksandr Rozen, "Preniya storon," Zv, 3 (1977), pp. 3-77, 4 (1977), pp. 3-74.

[200]Akhto Levi, "Bezhat' ot teni svoyei," M, 12 (1979), pp. 23-135. The novel is semi-autobiographical. The author, himself a former convict, is best known for his 1968 novel Zapiski serogo volka (Notes of a Con) and its sequel Ulybka fortuny (The Smile of Fortune).

[201]For a reflection of Kollontai's teachings in Soviet literature of the 1920's, see Louise Luke's essay in Ernest J. Simmons (ed.), Through the Glass of Soviet Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

[202]Vladimir Karpov, "Ne khuzhe lyudei," NS, 8 (1978), pp. 54-59.

[203]Viktoriya Tokareva, "Staraya sobaka," Z, 11 (1979), pp. 92-117.

[204]Ibid., p. 95.

[205]Georgii Semenov, "Frigiiskie vasil'ki," NS, 3 (1977), pp. 42-62.

[206]Leonid Zhukhovitskii, "Tol'ko dve nedeli," Z, 12 (1977), pp. 111-68.

[207]Ibid., p. 143.

[208]Ibid., pp. 163-64.

[209]Yakov Lipkovich, "V etot gor'kii medovyi mesyats," Zv, 7 (1978), pp. 84-126.

[210]Mikhail Roshchin, "Vospominanie," NM, 5 (1977), pp. 106-32, 6 (1977), pp. 132-61.

[211]Aleksandr Yashin, "Pervoye puteshestvie Marinki," NS, 1 (1977), pp. 59-75. The story was written in 1961.

[212]Inna Goff, "Medpunkt na vokzale," NM, 7 (1977), pp. 162-72.

[213]Vil' Lipatov, "Zhitie Vanyushki Murzina," Z, 9 (1978), pp. 41-43. The novel is artistically indebted to prerevolutionary dime novels. Consider the following monologue of an aggrieved father:

> That's what you are being accused of, Murzin. My daughter's life is being ruined on account of you. It's because of you that two husbands left her—but yourself, you married a general's daughter. You are a writer and in this way you think you are some brainy big shot. And after the general's daughter got rid of you, you've started up with Lyubka again, right? You won't divorce the other one, you keep calling her on the phone, and you don't want to marry Lyubka, isn't that a fact? Now you know, Murzin, what you are being accused of? (Ibid., p. 94.)

[214]Nikolai Vereshchagin, "Priklyuchenie," M, 12 (1978), pp. 72-94.

[215]Vil' Lipatov, "Igor' Savvovich," Z, 7 (1977), pp. 54-58. In the same novel, a woman protagonist declares that happiness is not just a husband, a car, or a three-room apartment(!), but love and a child. Men, however, are only interested in "scoring," and writing down in their notebook, "Number 19." Ibid., p. 76.

[216]Lev Yakimenko, "Gorodok," M, 4 (1979), pp. 5-132. In an amusing coincidence, Semen Babayevskii's novels that are being referred to with sarcasm appear in the same journal as Yakimenko's.

[217]Aleksandr Avdeyenko, "V pote litsa tvoyego," NM, 1 (1978), pp. 3-77, 2 (1978), pp. 148-82, 3 (1978), pp. 104-82. The novel's plot follows classical outlines of Stalinist potboilers. An old and very ill Party functionary undertakes an inspection tour of his old haunts in order to report on them to the authorities. He sees impressive technological progress, much labor enthusiasm, great devotion to the Communist Party, healthy patriotism and vivid memories of

past heroism. At the same time he must note various temporary difficulties, vexing misunderstandings and messy love lives. There is also the appalling tendency of some people to take their blessings for granted, and a few have grown conceited and greedy. The following is a reasonably representative sample of the quality of Avdeyenko's prose: "Your order contradicts the letter and the spirit of Soviet law. It is not humanitarian. It smacks of local favoritism and arbitrariness." (Ibid., 3 [1978], pp. 161-62.)

[218] Ibid., 1 (1978), p. 16.

[219] A Soviet source (Literaturnoye obozrenie, No. 5 [1975], p. 37) reported nearly 500 divorces for every thousand marriages. In Moscow, the figure is somewhat higher, 535, and simple cohabitation is not uncommon. Cited in N. N. Shneidman, "The Controversial Prose of the 1970's: Problems of Marriage and Love in Contemporary Soviet Literature," Canadian Slavonic Papers, Vol. XVIII, No. 4 (December 1976), p. 410.

[219a] Anatolii Sofronov, "Pesnya zhizni," M, 4 (1977), pp. 151-76.

[220] Thus, in one novella a widow and a widower team up because, both believe, a joint household would ease the strain of raising their children. Even though the man wants no sex, the arrangement will presumably endure. Vyacheslav Shugayev, "Arifmetika lyubvi," NS, 2 (1977), pp. 48-67.

[221] Vasilii Fedorov, "Zhenit'ba Don Zhuana," M, 1 (1978), pp. 165-79, 2 (1978), pp. 154-56, 3 (1978), pp. 129-41.

[222] Vasilii Belov, "Svidaniya po utram," NS, 1 (1977), pp. 95-102. The question appears on p. 97.

[223] I. Grekova, "Khozyaika gostinitsy," Zv, 9 (1976), pp. 7-123. A number of situations from this novel (e.g., a single mother of three, one of them not her own but a friend's; an alcoholic lover) are found also in Grekova's later and less impressive novel. I. Grekova, "Kafedra," NM, 9 (1978), pp. 10-168.

[224]Yurii Skop, "Tekhnika bezopasnosti," NM, 2 (1977), pp. 14-127, 3 (1977), pp. 27-108.

[225]Aleksandr Malyshev, "Takoye schast'ye," NS, 3 (1977), pp. 9-20. This is followed by another story by the same author which also features an unmarried mother: her lover will not divorce his wife. Ibid., pp. 20-25.

[226]Leonid Frolov, "Zvezda upala," NS, 7 (1978), pp. 106-31.

[227]Pavel Nilin, "Vpervye zamuzhem," NM, 1 (1978), pp. 80-102.

[228]Yu. Surovtsev, "Mir dushi chelovecheskoi. Zhenskaya lirika: obzor motivov i popytki portretov," NM, 4 (1978), pp. 276. Yet, Surovtsev claims, a study of 27 volumes of verse by women poets and 258 by men reveals little of this problem. For that matter, poetry by women authors differs little from verse written by men, except for the fact that women write less about politics and more about the process of aging. Ibid., pp. 280-81.

[229]Georgii Baklanov, "Druzya," NM, 2 (1975), pp. 26-97, 3 (1975), pp. 19-89. The observation is found in NM, 2 (1975), p. 29.

[230]Dimitrii Yevdokimov, "Romkina tselina," M, 6 (1979), pp. 3-53.

[231]Valentina Yermolova, "Muzhskie progulki," NS, 7 (1978), pp. 3-98. See especially pp. 27-29.

[232]Valentina Chudakova, "Kak ya boyalas' generalov," NS, 8 (1978), pp. 22-43, and the same author's "Ratnoye schast'ye," Zv, 11 (1977), pp. 14-69.

[233]I. Velembovskaya, "Marisha Ogon'kova," Z, 12 (1979), pp. 51-136.

[234]Nikolai Voronov, "Lyagushonok na asfal'te," M, 12 (1976), p. 27.

[235]Ibid., 1 (1977), pp. 104-5, 112.

[236]Yurii Skop, "Tekhnika bezopasnosti," NM, 2 (1977), pp. 14-127, 3 (1977), pp. 27-108

[237]Yurii Nagibin, "Beglets," NS, 10 (1978), pp. 71-113.

[238]Aleksandr Borin, "Znakhar'," DN (1977), pp. 178-227.

[239]Mikhail Kolosov, "Tri kulya chernykh sukharei," M, 7 (1978), pp. 4-58, 8 (1978), pp. 9-134.

[240]Mikhail Vainer, "Nesovpadenie," Zv, 5 (1978), pp. 11-104.

[241]Mikhail Godenko, "Polosa otchuzhdeniya," NS, 9 (1978), pp. 6-54, 10 (1978), pp. 116-50.

[242]Vladimir Tendryakov, "Zatmenie," DN, 5 (1977), pp. 15-150.

[243]Ibid., pp. 135-42.

[244]Ibid., pp. 60-68.

[245]S. V. Utechin, A Concise Encyclopedia of Russia (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964), pp. 177-78.

[246]Anatolii Dimarov, "Tri povesti," Z, 1 (1979), pp. 86-170. The three novellas are connected by similar settings and plots.

[247]Nikolai Yevdokimov, "Ozhidaniya," NS, 3 (1979), pp. 3-32.

[248]Yurii Kazakov, "Vo sne ty gor'ko plakal," NS, 7 (1977), pp. 111-21.

[249]Sergei Yesin, "Vnuk," NS, 10 (1976), pp. 87-99.

[250]Aleksandr Dologov, "Svoi deti," NS, 8 (1976), pp. 3-66.

[251]Yurii Krasavin, "Khorosho zhivu," Zv, 9 (1977), pp. 29-107.

[252]Vladimir Karpov, "Rasskazy," NS, 8 (1978), pp. 47-54.

[253]Viktor Perepelka, "Odolei," NS, 11 (1976), pp. 134-49.

[254]Sergei Yesin, "Tekushchii den'," NS, 9 (1977), pp. 34-51.

[255]Geoffrey Hosking, Beyond Socialist Realism, p. 73.

[256]Valentin Rasputin, "Poslednii srok," RG, 23 (1976).

[257]Voprosy literatury, 7 (1980), p. 4.

[258]Valentin Pikul', "Bogatstvo," MG, 8 (1977), pp. 19-146, 9 (1977), pp. 23-139.

[259]Dmitrii Yeremin, "Pered pryzhkom," RG, 7 (1980).

[260]Lev Slavin, "Ardennskie strasti," NM, 9 (1976), pp. 126-207, 10 (1976), pp. 11-79. The author is a veteran Soviet journalist, dramatist and writer of thrillers.

[261]Aleksandr Pletnev, "Rasskazy," NS, 10 (1978), pp. 9-14.

[262]Nikolai Dubov, "Koleso Fortuny," Zv, 3 (1977), pp. 84-174, 4 (1977), pp. 81-148, 5 (1977), pp. 64-160.

[263]Viktor Konetskii, "Elpidifor Peskarev," DN, 2 (1977), pp. 103-26.

[264]Ibid., p. 124.

[265]Ibid., pp. 121-23.

[266]Ivan Neruchev, "Nevesta Forda-mladshego," MG, 6 (1977), pp. 163-92.

[267]Lest her readers find this excessive adulation of everything Russian a bit suspect, the author endows him with Yugoslav ancestry. Alla Drabkina, "Chto skazhesh' o sebe," Zv, 4 (1979), pp. 71-135.

[268]Yurii Nagibin, "Odin na odin," Z, 5 (1979), pp. 78-111.

[269]Vasilii Aksenov, "Kruglye sutki non-stop," NM, 3 (1976), pp. 51-122. Aksenov, as already mentioned, has since emigrated and now lives in this country and has now changed the spelling of his name to Vasili Aksyonov.

[270]Nikolai Voronov, "Lyagushonok na asfal'te," M, 1 (1977), p. 142.

[271]Anatolii Sofronov, "Giganty," M, 2 (1976), pp. 61-88.

[272]Ye. Sidorov in Voprosy literatury, 1 (1976), p. 41. The statement had originally appeared in the same journal's June 1975 issue.

[273]V. Litvinov in Voprosy literatury, 7 (1980), pp. 36-39.

[274]Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[275]There have even been some timid attempts at reformulating the old definition of Socialist Realism, still the only accepted official creed of Soviet literature. Thus, the late Boris Suchkov proposed to define it as "a historically open system of truthful description of life, equally open to new manifestations of changing reality, and open also to new artistic forms, infinitely varied, but capable of reflecting the truth of the real world." Suchkov's definition would impart legitimacy to literary experimentation, and also do away with one of the most distrubing features of the old formula of Socialist Realism. The obligation to portray reality in its "revolutionary development" required the writer to present the ideal, the desired, as already existing. Suchkov, a critic remembered for a number of unorthodox proposals (he was,

among others, a leading champion of the admission of Franz Kafka into the Soviet literary pantheon), failed to get the new definition accepted as official.

[276]For a discussion of the more sophisticated "high" literature of the period (as opposed to the popular writing of mass appeal), see Maurice Friedberg, "Soviet Literature Under Brezhnev," Problems of Communism, May-June 1980, pp. 53-64.

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